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JULY 1915



The PUPPET SHOP

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

(OF SMART SET)

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THE SMART SET

Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

and
H. L. MENCKEN

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HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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THE SMART SET

[A polite magazine for polite people]

THE SCHOLAR

By Owen Hatteras

I HAD often wondered how Thompkins, who was so busy a man, had found time to acquire such a wide knowledge of the Classics, and that, too, not in translations, but in the original languages.

As I grew better acquainted with him the wonder deepened into mystery. For, at his club, to which I also belonged, I always found him reading magazines, or immersed in the *Times*. And yet, without the self-consciousness of the Pedant, he would interlard his conversation with quotations from Latin, Greek, German, French, Italian and even Russian.

As I like to find out things for myself, I at first patiently watched him to see if I could lay hold of the clue to his scholarship. But still he seemed the same as other men.

"Surely," thought I, "he must be falling back on the education he received in his youth, while at preparatory school and college—even at that a super-extraordinary one!"

To my astonishment, however, I learned that his extremely crowded business life had begun when he was a mere child, as office-boy. For he was, as the phrase has it, a self-made man.

One day I made bold to question him. I could no longer contain my curiosity within the bounds of silence. I found that his hours were non-union in their length . . . after breakfast he hurried to his office, where he remained, having a light lunch brought in, till five o'clock.

And in the evening, when he went neither to theater nor opera, he was to be found at the club, reading idly, or discussing politics, finance, or sport, with his associates.

And now I could no longer restrain myself from direct questioning.

"Thompkins, how in the world do you do it?" I blurted.

"Do what?" he counter-questioned.

"How do you find time for all your reading? Since you've never been to college—since you've been out in the world hustling for yourself since boyhood—"

"Oh, that's quite easy to explain," he returned, handing me a cigar and lighting one for himself. "You see," he continued, "I am a married man." I gave him a level look in the eyes and laughed. I thought he was joking, though I saw no point to what he had just said, for what has marriage to do with scholarship? But I noticed that

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THE SCHOLAR

he was being serious, so I questioned him further. . . .

"Well, since we've gone so far," I remarked, "would you please to tell me what marriage has to do with it. . . . I always thought that a married man has less time to himself than a bachelor!"

"He does!" responded Thompkins immediately.

"Then how in—"

"It's this way," explained Thompkins, settling himself easily in the great leather-covered armchair. "Every time we go anywhere together, my wife and I—I, of course, have to wait for her . . . for you know how pokey women are . . . waiting naturally makes me impatient . . . so while engaged in so doing I—"

"You read the Classics!" I snorted in unbelief.

"Exactly so."

"But why not a newspaper or popular novel?"

"I grow too impatient for that . . . my chief vice is impatience, you know . . . and I must always have something more than light reading to absorb my mind and keep me calm . . . and so I study—say for half an hour or an hour—Greek or Latin, or any of half a dozen modern languages. . . .

"No—there's nothing wonderful about it . . . any man could make a fairly erudite scholar of himself, if, instead of storming around, he but took advantage of the time his wife makes him wait. . . ."

After a pause he continued, as if in answer to a silent question of mine. "Oh, yes—at present I am reading Bishop Ulfilas's translation of the Bible into the Moeso-Gothic."



THE POTENCY OF PRAYER

By Paul Hervey Fox

HANGING above the door,
A poster wrought with gilded flourishes.
On it four words: "GOD BLESS OUR HOME."
You know the sort of thing:
A base of faded black; a beveled frame
About the whole; and in the center
Those simple words in glaring yellow,
Picked out with hideous decoration.
Perhaps, you say, I sneer
At this drab thing above the tawdry threshold,
This one, one word of light and hope
In this dark, hopeless household?
Ah, no, my friend, I do not sneer.
I know quite well the worth, the use
Of this poor placard!
Mountain and molecule each must serve
Some special purpose in the world
So it is with this sign.
Often, the husband of the house,
When he returns home drunk and happy,
Employs it as a stick with which to beat
His shrewish wife.

THE FRUIT OF MISADVENTURE

By Waldo Frank

"... and they entered the Palace and golden fruit was served unto them on platters of amethyst. But the fruit satisfied them not, so that they went empty to their couches."

—*Caspar de Maistre-Joie.*

IT was not the cold of the fresh room that made it difficult for Thomas Braceby to arise from bed in the morning; it was the weariness in his heart. But for all his forty-five years, Mr. Braceby was not wise enough to see this clearly, nor honest enough to avow it. So one night, after he had tucked himself under his luxurious blue quilt and between the linen sheets that seemed hard to him and unfriendly, he said to his valet:

"Jones, from now on open the windows in the library and throw aside the portières. That'll give me enough air. With the windows in this room open also, there's too much chill in the morning and too much draught for my catarrh."

And Jones told Cook, as they sat over their midnight beer, that the master was getting old.

"Why, he's been old for five years," said Cook, pouring a glass and munching a slice.

"How's that?" asked Jones, who had been only five months in the service.

"The sign of a bachelor's getting old is when he puts a stop to women—not when he sleeps in a room with the windows shut. Mr. Braceby ain't had a love affair since he was forty."

"That's gettin' old awful young," observed Jones. "Perhaps he had an unhappy turn-down and that's what stopped him."

"Perhaps," said Cook with a superior air, "but it's not true, just the same. Mr. Braceby never cared for no woman

yet that didn't care for him. He never had a turn-down. He just got disgusted—that's all,—tired. And what's gettin' old, if it ain't that?"

"He's a handsome gentleman." Jones thought of his waistcoats.

"A fine one." Cook thought of his Christmas gifts.

"Well," Jones slapped the bottle on the kitchen table with the philosophical emphasis consequent on thinking of waistcoats. "Such is life!"

"Even the most gifted and the most blessed of us has to bear bitter fruit." Cook could mix metaphors as well as sauces.

"Wha' d'ye mean?" Jones was startled by a statement so obviously above him.

"What do I mean, young man? What I say. Mr. Braceby's been a gay and mighty man these twenty years."

"Well?"

"Well," said Cook, "sooner or later, the tree has to bear fruit!"

With all the contempt of a baffled Philistine, Jones looked at this new Deborah. "Annie, you're talkin' like a rabbit. I'm going to bed."

II.

THE following morning Mr. Braceby rose early—at nine—and ate his breakfast in quickened tempo. With his last cup of coffee he instructed Jones to call Mrs. Martin Linck on the wire. Up to now there had been a heavy scowl upon his usually gentle

face. But after he had made a luncheon engagement on the telephone his expression softened and his cheeks wreathed with a benign smile. All of this, however, was beyond the comprehension of Jones, for he knew Mrs. Linck, and she was fifty if she was a day. But Jones did not speak of his puzzlement to Cook, for Cook might have understood what he could not—and that would have touched his masculine pride.

Five years before all this, Thomas Braceby had undergone a revolution. He had been sitting in his library one winter night, too weary to undress and too apathetic to ignite his gas-lights. It was in the same apartment where he lived now, a rather colorless, yet elegant and completely comfortable suite of rooms in the club district of New York. While by no means ideal, it had always seemed to him the most convenient setting for his cultivated vagabondage. Braceby had never become attached to a home, and the conception of aught more than a purely physical roost did not enter his mind. What he needed was a cozy living-room for those brief hours when he should choose to live there; a dining-room fitted for the exigencies of a capacious dinner; a bed-chamber in which he could sleep, and a pair of additional rooms in which he could house chance masculine and feminine guests. What he demanded in particular was freedom to live as he wished and a retinue of servants, in his apartment and in the entrance-hall below, who were eager and efficient in carrying out his wishes. All this he had. And everything else that he required he found in his near vicinity; to the east of him in the state-ly homes where he was always welcome, and to the west of him in café and theater, where he had long been known.

Upon the evening in question, Braceby did not return shivering from his hollow club, stand disconsolate in the mocking light of a Tiffany lamp and yearn for a little cottage with a wife. He had had an interesting time at the

club, hearing the tale of a chum who had walked five hundred miles unescorted up the Yalu River. And whereas the subject of cottages did not engross him, Braceby was convinced that he knew more of certain wives than their husbands. What irritated him was that there was no one within ear-shot to kindle those artificial gas-lights. And what frightened him was not the gray, cavernous vision of a deserted old age with two rheumatic knees unadorned by grandchildren, but the perverse impulse within him to go to bed with his clothes on, out of sheer dislike for taking them off. Needless to say, Braceby drove the impulse from him like a leprous thing, and resolved upon the instant to discharge his valet in the morning. True, he had granted him leave of absence. But a valet not clairvoyant enough to feel that his master was coming home that evening, soured and frozen and tired out, was no valet for Thomas Braceby. Body-servants and priests must be possessed of a workable, mystical sixth sense.

The elaborate gilt clock, shaped like a globe and supported by two rather distorted angels, ticked away. The shadows were thick on the mahogany bookcase, within whose glass doors, ribbed in satin rose, Braceby stored his spirits, his cordials and his poker-chips. On the thus prostituted piece of furniture stood a handsome silver frame, from out of which came the eerie eyes of a famous actress. And on the silk-muffled walls between the brocade drawn windows, the head of a moose loomed ominous and imposing. The light emanating from the lamp (a huge bronze structure upon three carved legs, which blossomed six feet from the floor into a heavy replica of gnarled oak-leaves) served merely to emphasize the gloom. And Thomas Braceby sat in his armchair (it was a family relic and its two arms represented the necks and heads of very elongated lions) and impotently shivered.

Then the bell of the house-telephone gave a sharp ring and subsided. Braceby's orders downstairs were of

long standing—that he was not deaf and that a fifty-second clamor was no more convincing than the notice of a moment.

"Damn. Who's that?" muttered Braceby, and wondered whether it might not perhaps be someone who would oblige him by turning on his heat.

"There's a lady down here, sir," said the well-trained Cerberus, who, according to Braceby, was distinguished from most of his variety by the fact that he actually had one solid head on his shoulders.

"Is she short and rather thin?" asked the bachelor.

"No, sir. She's tall. She's dark. She's veiled."

"Let her up."

Braceby moved laboriously to the hall, loosed the door-latch so it could be opened from without, and returning with a meditative step, sank back into his mid-Victorian armchair. The precise picture of the hall-boy had prepared him for an untoward occurrence. A moment later the woman stepped into the light. Braceby rose from his chair. Instead of coming forward he turned toward the fireplace.

"You shouldn't have come here, Florence," he said calmly, "but now that you're here—" he bent over and placed a match to the gas-logs, "sit down."

"Is that the way you greet me on my first visit?"

The tall, slender woman stood before the door, which she had shut behind her. An opaque veil, glistening with her frozen breath, was still over her face.

The gas took fire with a sharp explosion, and the clumsy man jumped back in momentary fright. Mrs. Narvin, without a tremor, threw a seal coat upon a chair and placed her hat on the bookcase. She then drew off her gloves, tossed them before the silver frame upon whose occupant she found time to bestow a candid glance, and came forward toward the man. The entire score of her actions had been executed

with a despatch of which a *comédienne* in a Protean rôle might well have boasted and with a power of deliberate suggestion whence Balzac could have gleaned her history.

Braceby, upon whom such evidence of feminine prowess was not wasted, stood expectant, well aware that she had more to say.

"Why do you receive me like this? Is it the way you feel?"

Braceby drew up a chair and sat beside her in the heat of the gas-logs.

"It is precisely the way I feel, my dear friend."

Mrs. Narvin measured the man before her with restrained bewilderment. There was in her careful scrutiny the interest of a calm yet worried combatant who realizes that to win one must first have understood, and that to understand one must first convey the impression that one already does. Braceby looked exactly his age. His sleek, black hair was faintly, regularly greying. His eyes twinkled with a constant inner observation, even as they gleamed somewhat coldly with that lack of real good-will which accrues from too much looking-on and too little taking part. His face, withal, was as kindly as it was strong, and the lines about his large, thin mouth were the tracings of a wholesome sensuality and a great readiness to smile and to respond. In contrast to the soft chiseling of his chin and to the slight bagginess of his cheeks that were gently wreathed, his forehead appeared serenely aloof, and his heavy, protrusive brows that offset the sunken grey of his eyes seemed almost dangerous and certainly austere.

With an easy grace, indicative of experience and assurance, Braceby stretched out his hands and held hers, tenderly poised between his upturned palms. His fingers tapered and were thin.

"You have come to see me, Florence," he said, "because, presumably, you wanted me."

"Yes. Because I wanted you."

"And you shall have me. But in a

far sincerer manner than you suppose. This shall not be the usual love affair. Instead of taking you in my arms and giving you *that*—and for all the lovely alchemy of women, that is still a coarse, masterful, faulty thing—I shall keep you near me, as you are now, my friend, and I shall give you myself.” He paused. Mrs. Narvin was thirty. The thought struck him that he was an impudent fraud to treat her as if she knew less than he did. “I am going to make a confession,” he added, hesitantly.

“The confession that, now I have come, your love is frightened and has disappeared?”

“Just that—” said Braceby, “Now that you have come, my love is frightened at such a splendid, heedless sacrifice. And, in the realization of how small, compared to it, is that which I have offered to you and which you have at last come to take—I no longer dare, I no longer want to offer it. In fact, I withdraw it; it is too petty.”

There was a silence. Mrs. Narvin withdrew her hands from his and then returned them. The room still froze.

“Do not judge yet,” Braceby went on, heartened. “You do not understand. Listen and perhaps you may.”

Like a heroine in a Pinero play, Mrs. Narvin dropped into a chair and prepared to give ear. This man before her, alas, was no romantic lover; what he had to offer was vastly more vocal than passionate, but such as it was, she felt a yearning to receive it, and so she sat in silence while he rumbled on. A woman wants all. If that all is less than one per cent., she still wants that less than one per cent.

“Florence,” he began, “what I am saying now would sound truer, doubtless, in the mouth of a sentimental youth addressing his first flame. The point is that such a youth and I have a point in common. We have never loved. But the lad who could speak so has never loved because he has never had a chance. And I have never loved because I have had too many chances. So it is that while the words of the boy

would be comical, my confession is nearer tragedy. You are going to leave this room, in half an hour, far cleaner than you came into it. For there is a part of me that has the power of chastening, despite that other part that has so often defiled. And that part alone you shall have. The other part, that other women knew, I shall tell you of. For I want you to take that away with you also—to bury it; it will not stain your life. And I crave to be rid of it. Oh, you do not dream how I crave to be rid of it!”

Mrs. Narvin coughed sympathetically and Braceby plowed on.

“Can you imagine, Florence, what it is like not to be able to respond, with one’s whole heart, to the life-bestowing embraces of a woman? Well, when I have felt anything at all—which has not been often—that is what I have felt. I have felt emptiness, disgust; I have felt unworthiness and anger. But the most fearful of feelings is that of silence, of inner silence against the bestowal of a woman; it is the fear that this and this alone, might arise from what you offer which must keep me, for once, from running such a risk. For that inability to forget and to be equal to a woman’s gift is killing me. I love you so dearly now that it would kill me to feel this with you. And yet, so often have I felt it when I seemed most certain not to, that I am afraid—I am a coward. I will not risk the joy I have now, of being your equal in love and in devotion. I will not put my feeling to the test; for I am afraid I might fail. And that is the reason, Florence, why you must go back to your house.”

Mrs. Narvin pressed her lips to his cold hands. And Braceby, pausing a moment, went on with a diminished ease.

“Let me tell you, Florence, of one event in my life which will help illumine this. I never knew the woman’s name. But there were a thousand ways of being sure she was a gentlewoman. She looked something like you. Perhaps that is why I was reminded of her. For any other of my miserable

misadventures would have served as well. Perhaps because she also was tall and dark and silent and because her eyes, like yours, seemed simply to be the splendid symbols of a woman's tears, I am the stronger to prevent this ending as that did; and the more fearful lest it might.

"She came to me, as I say, nameless. I never sought to learn her name. But I wanted to marry her. I proposed, if she had a husband, that she should divorce him and let me legitimize her gift. She said she had no husband; but that she would not marry me. And I understood why. There was no continuity in my love. It was a passion, a tenderness, built upon no deep giving of myself. And this she felt; and the fact that she felt it and that I did not prove her wrong was torture to me. That was more than ten years ago. I pleaded with her: 'Tell me who you are and this deeper thing will come.' She shook her head."

Braceby buried his face in his hands. The scene was going very well. Then, once more, he sought those of Mrs. Narvin.

"'Bear me a child,' I pleaded, 'and all this will change!' My friend shivered as if I had suggested an unnatural thing; and a horror came into her eyes that I would die rather than see again in yours. 'No,' she said, 'I could not bear *you* a child. It would not be your child. Only your mind—not your heart—would know that it was your child.' I never saw her again after that time. Months after, I received word telling me that a child had been born. Her word framed her indictment: I must never try to find that child; even as I had sworn never to try to find her."

"But you must have prayed God to find them for you!"

"No," answered Braceby, "I did not have the heart to pray for that. The woman was right. She had felt the truth about me, but only in the act which was to make that truth so tragically present. I do not want you to feel that truth. Rather than have you come

upon it in the flaying of your own ecstasy as did she, I would flay myself as I am doing. I was condemned by the one Justice that is never wrong—the instinct of a mother about a father. I have no doubt it was for their good. It was a bitter good."

"All good is bitter good," mused Mrs. Narvin.

"You do not think I am feigning this to be free of you?"

"I know you love me as you are able, Tom."

"Listen then—" Braceby resumed her hands and the meretricious logs pelted little yellow gleams upon his quiet face. "Once, I think, I loved a woman in the way that that silent woman knew I had not loved her. It was the splendid period of my life. I was twenty-five then—fifteen years ago. She did not love me. And that love died."

"Perhaps it really didn't die."

"It amounts to the same thing."

And Florence rose and went home. They parted friends.

III

BRACEBY returned to the room and turned out the gas. Thank God, he was rid of another woman! And not only of another woman, but in a larger sense, of woman. In all his play-acting, indeed, there had been a strong element of honesty and sincerity; if the face that he had turned to Mrs. Narvin had not been wholly his real face, it had at least been the face that he wanted to present to women, to the world, to life itself. Old memories thronged in his mind, beguiling him and torturing him. He saw the dead years as vain and hollow things; he felt all the bitterness of cold emotions and wasted days. Until the blue grey of morning oozed through the dark green of the window shades and cast a clammy, sepulchral light through the room, he sat there in his chair, mulling over forgotten and poignant things. Then he went to bed—in his clothes.

When he awoke he was cold and

stiff, but somehow the feeling of futility, of emptiness, of tragic vanity was gone. It had driven him out of his club; it had caused him to turn away from the proffered kisses of Florence Narvin; it had given him the worst evening of his whole life. But now that feeling was gone, and in its place was the thrill of a new purpose. The idea came to him that the pale day outside, raw and anemic as it was at its birth, would see great changes for him, and perhaps go down into his history as a great turning point. A notion flitted around the edges of his consciousness; he reached out for it, trying to pin it down to coherence; it finally showed itself as a determination to make a call upon an old friend, Mrs. Linck. He was done with women; he would now try humanity. A vast sentimentality surged through him. He ceased to pity himself and began vaguely to admire himself.

Mrs. Linck received him in her working library. She was one of those wealthy women of New York in whom charity has become as great a passion as, in others, bridge or dancing or adultery. In all cases, the passion has a common ground. It is regarded, in the given light, as the thing to do. If the woman be temperamentally fitted for her chosen field, as was Mrs. Linck, there may even come of it some measure of accomplishment. A great city produces some charity-workers who actually do good, even as it possesses some bad wives who actually bestow love. Mrs. Linck was the president of a great orphan asylum and trustee in a dozen allied philanthropies. She had a private telephone in her private library and her private secretary was a great gleaner of publicity. She was a well-rounded automaton.

As the much-affaired woman and the denaturalized Don Juan sat together over their doilies and their mushrooms, Mrs. Linck pushed the talk to a quick conclusion.

"So you've decided, Thomas, that you want the girl?"

"Yes, I've decided. If she's all you

say she is and that she seems to be—I am ready. I have made a failure of my life as a companion of women. I've never been so much as a bad husband, I'm eager to see if Nature singled me out, perhaps, to be a father."

Next day club New York, social Manhattan and bibulous Broadway had a common interrogation point about which to huddle heads, chatter queries and produce preposterous explanations. Why was Tom Braceby giving up his staid, time-proved apartment? Why was he moving into a country house surrounded by forty green acres, in the vague wilds of Westchester County, where he would have no neighbor more exciting than John D. Rockefeller? And who, on earth, was this beautiful, shy, fifteen-year-old wisp of a girl with whom he was determined to brave such solitude?

Sophia Linck disseminated through the more casual channels of her well-trained publicity that Mr. Braceby, at the express bidding of her orphan asylum, was adopting a daughter. Broadway, craving ever her enormities, whispered that this daughter he was adopting had probably an old, biological right to her new legal title. And in the Fifth Avenue clubs which had refused complacently and patronizingly to accept Braceby's sudden and amazing virtue as other than a concealed viciousness, the smoky fumes of the Scotch highballs had it that the girl was neither daughter nor adopted daughter, but prospective wife, and perhaps even wife *de facto*.

"It is very possible," mused Braceby, when the ideas of these three great schools of conjecture were detailed to him, "it is more than possible that all these theorists may be wrong. It is impossible that more than one of them be right."

In the meantime, he thought he was profoundly happy. Only Cook, in her less sporadic duties, regretted the Egypt in which she had been accustomed so long to prepare flesh-pots. Diet was a point in the new father's careful preparation.

"This plain food will be good for my gout," he apologized one day when he had made a visit to the kitchen, "and besides, Annie, you're getting altogether too fat."

IV

HE called her Cherette. Her hair was indeed a crown and a halo to her face. It waved like an amber-tinted cloud over her forehead; it went in exquisite offsetting to the transparent texture of her cheeks. Far below her ears it fell, terminant in a delicate, pale down that accentuated the soft fulness of her neck, whose nape curved out. What one noticed first about Cherette was her hair. What one pitted against that first delight was her eyes. From their large, half-shut casements looked forth a different creature from that suggested by the rest of her.

Her hair was that of a child—exquisite, innocent, untrammelled in her youth's poesy, ignorant of any ugliness against which to struggle. Of such a flowering was also the lithe lightness of her body, its instinctive grace, the swift response of mouth and hand to the airy pulse of girlhood. Such was the sum of her every action: the craning of her neck, the unconscious bend of her waist, the curious habit of placing her long, nerveless hands upon her boyish hips, the sudden kicking-out and crossing of her little slipped feet as she sat in her rocking-chair and laughed and sparkled. But to all these fair tokens her eyes were a discountenancing denial. Braceby, when he had first met her at the asylum, had noticed her hair and her laughter before he was struck with her eyes. Else he had never adopted her. His first impressions seemed to brand as ridiculous the vague feeling which came later that the child knew more than he did and that she was more likely to be his master than his pliant charge.

Perhaps it was a sub-conscious impulse of self-concealment that caused Cherette forever to hold her eyes half-shut and to let her girlish tresses fall

on her forehead in such a manner as to shield her eyes from a too unhampered scrutiny. Her pupils were a light, piercing blue, curiously near in nuance to the blueish white about them. And they peered forth from long, dark lashes with the wisdom of a second life. They gave the suggestion of disillusioned, compelling womanhood. However gayly they seemed to laugh, however bitterly to weep (although that was strangely seldom), the soul behind them seemed eternally aloof from these natural effusions, and too worldly wise in any way to be a part of them.

In the actions of Cherette, however, there was no slightest reinforcement to the canny look of her eyes. She was a child in every word of her mouth, in every creation of her mind, even as in every movement of her body. The crass, seasoned creature that peered forth from this gentle frame seemed inarticulate and independent of the actual, living girl. So Braceby forgot promptly that he had ever been impressed by its existence. Indeed, it would have required a mystic to remain aware of it, longer than a moment, in the face of her confuting presence. And Braceby was only a repentant bachelor, blindly adoring before the mystery of girlhood, bathed in a flush of Spring after too long consorting in a hot-house.

Braceby's chief joy in his new duties lay in the feeling that this seductive child was beyond comprehension. His stubborn optimism impelled him to apply all virtues to this Unknown because of the sharp lessons of his life, which had taught him to apply all vices to what he understood. Five hundred years ago Braceby might have burned his instinctive incense to the Unknown. As it was, a luxurious estate became his monk's-cell, and Cherette became his goddess. Each age has its own technique for the expression of the music of all the ages. Braceby would not have appreciated his analogy with Saint Simeon Stylites. But then, the ascetic who worshipped God on a pillar

would not have liked the imputation that he, too, was a mere human animal, feeding his senses a sharp ration of the Unknown because they were not content with more obvious fodder. Simeon, in his sensual disgust, became a saint. Braceby, in his, became a father. Both conditions, in man, are secondary states. One can attain to neither without having been first a lover.

It was not long before Cherette had become attached to her protector. The situation between the pair took on the fresh, airy nature of its setting. Braceby was guilty of no far-fetched trope when he said that his heart was as new and as green as the lawn about his country-house. What time the slender, tall girl was not busied with her various masters, who came daily from town to teach her the amplified "three R's" of culture, she spent with Braceby. They took long walks, reaching far out from his estate. They went on smashing gallops after a few lessons had made of Cherette an efficient Amazon and Braceby had become relimbered of muscle. And evenings, they would sit on the porch and she would chatter, or in the glow of the living-room's real log-fire, and he would read aloud.

They read "The Idylls of the King," and Cherette was in love with Guinevere and bored by Arthur. They read an expurgated "Gulliver's Travels," and when the girl learned that the tale she had read was but a part of the tale Swift had written, she was disconsolate and her favorite book became the object of her anger. Braceby tried Scott, but the child buried her head in the rug and fell asleep while the blaze of the logs turned her hair to liquid bronze. Then, he resorted to "Paul and Virginia," but Cherette was disgusted and refused to listen. The Indian romances of Chateaubriand fared no better.

"I don't like stories," she said, one day. "They're so slow. I could make 'em up much faster. Besides, so many words one right after another sound ugly."

Musically, the child was exceptionally

promising. She had already had five years' instruction on the piano when Braceby adopted her. And to a swift facility in technic, she soon added a joyousness of interpretation which made her an adept in the lighter, more brilliant manner. Her teacher, eager for quick results, realized her penchant and versed her in the modern French and Italian schools to the neglect of the nobler Germans. At this, Braceby was, if anything, rejoiced; Brahms and Schumann and Beethoven had always seemed to him the mere necessary *impedimenta* of boring musical afternoons. The only really great composer for whom Cherette had active sympathy was Bach—the most cruel, the most unsentimental, perhaps the most eternal of them all. By the same token, she despised Mozart, even as she thought "silly" the Madonna of Raphael that had hung over her bed and which she had caused to be removed. She might have become attached to Wagner if her instructor had given her more than "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser" to know him by. But the unerring instinct of the girl caught the cloying effusiveness, the blatant Teutonism of these operas and unstintingly condemned them. Sentimental music of a sort she liked—the sort that was really cold and heartless underneath. Mendelssohn and Massenet, whose sweetness is that of a deep, feminine, uncritical nature, she did not love. But the false surface-sentiment of Puccini, with its basis of bitter cynicism, attracted her; the delicate, metallic coldness of Debussy she portrayed with an exquisite although of course unconscious sympathy. And Grieg, that sensual pessimist with the soul of a stage necromancer and the hand of a dandy, was for a long time her favorite.

To a musician, these tastes would have served to bare her soul—and annotate her eyes. To Braceby, they were mere tastes, signifying nothing. For to Braceby, music was the mere pleasurable pelting of sound on ears. To how many professional musicians, in good sooth, is it anything more? If

folk knew better the meaning of the music they instinctively prefer they would be more chary of confession. But, then, if folk knew the meaning of the features on their faces, we should all wear masks. Life and Ignorance-of-Life were created at the same instant. Had the birth of the latter been delayed one moment, it would have sufficed for Knowledge to snuff out the former.

And so, in this gentle haze of illusion, a blissful year passed for Thomas Braceby. In both, there was the gleam of a newly discovered youth—in the young girl as in the man. And against the lying texture of their so different, yet so pathetically like illusions, glowed the deepest of truths—the resurgent impulse of life to feed rather on dreams than upon facts; to spin webs of fancy rather than unravel knots of actuality. Life knows, in its workings, how to transcend the tawdry confines to which Reason would hold it. Cherette, in her childish conviction that the world was a joyous theater fashioned and centered for her dalliance, might be mistaken; Braceby in his belief that Cherette was all that his suppressed and atrophied idealism conjured up, might be mistaken. In the essence both were right—both lived truly. And the stuff of their dreamings was more eternal than all those paltry marks of mind and body which men call truths and scientists set up as their exclusive idols. Unfortunately, these diaphanous webs were not to preserve.

V

CHERETTE was now seventeen. And Braceby had become "Daddie." Indeed, they were chums, and the guardian was the docile member of the fraternity. He went even so far as to take lessons with her. He crammed his recalcitrant mind with dry pages of history and abstruse algebraic formulæ in order to sustain himself at her level. Even such of his acts as had no immediate bearing on her own were colored and tempered by her presence. Thus, he tightened his friendship with

all the matrons that he knew in the city and dropped totally from heterodox companionship, even as he had ceased entertaining thoughts and theories at variance with the salubrious bringing-up of his charge.

For two years, he had gone to no theaters, save at matinées. Cherette loved the theater—indiscriminately. The sheer joy of performance and illusion sufficed her. She sat ecstasied before the garish carpentries of a musical comedy; and she sat ecstasied at a great actor's rendition of Hamlet. For opera, however, she did not care. The music she loved, perhaps—in musical form. But to such spectacles as those of pot-bellied tenors amorous before obese sopranos, who rent the air with their lung power while in the last throes of consumption, she could not bring her suffrage. Her sense of the ludicrous was too poignant. And her instinctive demand for simplicity—in dress, in speech, in art—prevailed against this bastard commodity under cover of which so much divine music is palmed off upon a jaded public. Since moreover, Braceby was not in advance with a command that she should love this and disdain that, her judgments came honestly and with a reason.

Save for such expeditions to the city in search of plays and concerts, the pair kept strictly to themselves on the Westchester estate. Their summer trips were curtailed to a single month. Cherette preferred her home to the hotels and her Daddie to the slightly ironic kindness of the persons she met in them. She had no longing, whatsoever, for the companionship of girls of her own age. She felt herself older and wiser than these daintily garnished dolls. And the callow, slack-chinned youths who dawdled in the wake of them and were only too eager to transfer their rudimentary dandyism from the dolls to herself, inspired her with a withering contempt. They were silly; the little girls were silly; their severe mothers were silly; the hotels were silly. Cherette preferred her Daddie. And Braceby preferred Cherette.

It was a ruddy morning of new Autumn. The eager pair were off early for a ramble in those flushed hills whose depths have been scarce discovered by New Yorkers. There was one spot to which they had frequently gone in the past year—a spot thickly garlanded in aspen, where generations of foliage had spread a gentle carpet of moss and underbrush. It was away from the by-path, and so tightly tucked in from the more open woods that a faithful people would have deemed it the retreat of some seclusive god. The materialistic Cherette called it her Bird-cage.

Braceby seated himself carefully on a rock and Cherette flung herself flat upon the ground, burying her sharp, fine nose in the soil, and tossing her heels. The love-song came down to her from a dozen nests. The Bird-cage seemed to be as thick with birds as it was with trees. In the back of her head, she felt the powerful caress of the cold, clear heaven as it shone through the lacing of green and brown. She did not see it, but it was as real a part of her mental picture as the little red ant before her, struggling over its infinitesimal hills and dales and carrying a wisp of straw three times as large as itself. The sibilant brush of leaves against the air, the musical give of slender trees and the suffused minor murmur of all the feverish, innumerable world that buzzed and chirped and breathed in the wind-driven grass, conjoined into one subtle harmony and drenched the girl with a strange, delicious pain. Her heels ceased their tossing, as if wearied by some invisible resistance; her head sank to one side upon the moss and her eyes closed.

Through her thin dress, Cherette felt the sharp embrace of the earth upon her little, eager breasts and instinctively she huddled closer. A languor crept through her limbs and she stretched them out, aware that they too were hard—almost brutally hard—against that mysterious earth. Two slight twinges went out from her temples and met in a warm, seductive agony that quickened breath and benumbed

thought. And so she lay, her hands clasped before her, her body tense and prone, her eyes burning against her lids. The blue of the sky shot through and merged with the warm, vital harmony of the birds and the Autumn-painted verdure. And to melt it rose a warm perfume—the soul of the earth—stinging her flesh to a new consciousness and quickening her senses until they lay quivering and receptive within the alluring notes of the woodland.

At first, it all seemed strange and Cherette was but half helpless before its ecstasy. But gradually, the myriad chants of the forest took on a more accustomed guise and became distinct; the girl's senses grew used to the sharp delights that were possessing them. Her mind bathed in the flood of feeling and became drenched, at one with it. The vital potency of Nature—ever most resurgent in Autumn when it is about to die—now merged her totally, soaking this young life with its eternal liquors until she became a vivid part. And when that moment came, Cherette was asleep—asleep in the world-rhythm which the leaves might whisper and the birds might chant, but which she was still too young to swing to, waking.

On the rock sat Thomas Braceby—and looked at the still, lithe figure and wondered and looked again. He was no longer a young man. There was grey in his hair and two thin creases forked out from beside his nose, tokens of long years of pressing his lips in resolution and shutting his eyes in pain or meditation. But of a sudden, all the weighing consciousness of age went from him, like a mist against the sun. And there came out, unveiled, a gleam of landscape which was new in his sight and glistening as if with dawn. Braceby had never had a youth. His life had been one endless missing it—all save the last two years whose color had been that of resignation. And now, blindly alive for its unnatural long wait, and the more blindly so for the drab mental field upon which it burst—a field of regret without an object and of submission without past pride—

came this pent-up Spring with the Autumn chill and made the man possessed.

Braceby rose and stepped lightly—it was the tread of a boy—to the side of the sleeping girl. Gently, he touched her hair. Gently, he held his breath to consonance with hers; gently, he gazed at the sun-kissed down on her neck, at the curve of her back that withdrew within the wide-sashed, supple waistline. And as he pastured, the gentleness was swept up—not lost—in a new flood of fever that resembled the scarlet splashing in the trees, even as the softer impulse seemed mothered by the croon of branches and the slow slant of the sky above him.

Braceby clutched himself and regained his seat. In all ways, his passion was that of youth—even to the extent that he was unaware of it. Nature had caught him up in her interminable whirlwind, wrenched him from the flat strand of misadventure in which twenty years had stationed him and blown him to the tropic stronghold of her dominion; yet he sat serenely ignorant, as heedless of where he had been rocked as was Chérètte, in her dreamless sleep, of the rhythm which had mastered her.

Braceby's love had devoured every fibre of his personality before Braceby became conscious that he was in love at all. Storm clouds become saturate before they burst. And to render this driving tempest, with its years of repression and its years of preparation, still more formidable, there came the need in its bursting to catch it up and hide it, lest one drop or flash of it fall upon the sunny object over which it was foregathered. Braceby tasted the essence of struggle in his need—once he was conscious—of keeping this new truth from the playful, heedless child he had made his daughter. Can you imagine a black cloud, bristling with lightning, bulging with thunder, bursting with rain, swung by a naughty god over a sun-bathed hamlet and there rent asunder? And can you imagine what Titanic force it would require to muffle up that thunder, to drown that fire, and

to snatch away that deluge ere it had reached the hamlet in its terrific downward charge? As such a gentle, budding life, the sentimental Braceby looked upon Chérètte; and as such a devastating cloud-burst, Braceby looked upon his love for her. He had not grown aware of it until the moment of its breaking-out. And now his passionate need was to catch up this blight, to swerve it, to hide it, to annihilate it. Chérètte must not only never hear; she must not even guess. The rift of a single fibre in her mind away from him would lose her altogether. And at the thought of such an end, the poor old fellow's temples beat like hammers.

Meantime, life went on. Chérètte grew blithely toward womanhood and Braceby assumed his martyrdom with an ironic smile and a calm tendency to moralize that his high-spirited ward took as the concomitant of a completed life and as a text for her own sharp-aimed cajoleries. What made most unbearable Braceby's passion to kiss her mouth was the freedom he had to kiss her cheeks. This point was symbolic of his torture. Three years of comradeship had endeared him to Chérètte. She loved him; it was her only love. And in a thousand pretty ways she showed it; it was her one field of non-musical demonstrativeness. She did not weary, even at eighteen, of her Daddie's knee and of the fond teasings which she knew how to direct against his composure while she was seated on his lap, her bare arms about his neck. And while she played and fondled, incarnate gaiety, poor Braceby was forever warding off his autumnal passion; constrained to sit still and act the father while every nerve in his body cried for crushing her in his arms and burning her against his lips.

The usage of romantic writers notwithstanding, all things have two sides—even emotions and even the emotion of love. Braceby adored Chérètte, but he also hated her. His hate was the respite and the revenge of his starved passion. And it made his life still more insufferable. A mute, blind resentment

surged, at times, against the innocent subject of his agony and the innocent object of his love. Tortured nature, its own victim, gave sinister voice to the right of hunger and the need of escape. If Braceby lay burning in his bed, battling the need to pour out his heart and to overwhelm with a life's tenderness the young, delicious creature who lay in the adjoining room, he had also to repress the will to be rid of his cross and to crush out what his tenderness dared not absorb.

VI

THEY went walking one day.

"Daddie," said Chérètte, close to him and looking directly up into his eyes, "why don't you want to go to the Bird-cage any more? We've not been there since last year."

Braceby pushed forward the blue bonnet which had fallen over her back. His fingers caressed her hair and his lips smiled. For the first time the girl caught a tinge of pathos beneath his gentleness.

"Why, Daddie!" she said and stopped.

Braceby took her upturned face in his hands and bent down for a kiss. He felt that he was not going to kiss her cheek—or her forehead. It was so easy; her lips were so near. And a youthful smile played so protectingly upon them. It would be safe—a quick kiss. That smile of childhood would ward off his passion and her response. He might even find solace in her cool taking of his embrace—a cure, indeed. Had he not perhaps whipped his craving with this too Quixotic denial? A sip sometimes quenches thirst which in parched abstinence seems insatiate. After all, what poison could be gleaned from this chaste fount? Was she not his daughter? Bah! His passion was the fever of starvation. With the taste he had all claims to, it would fade to a mere righteous fondness. On, then—to spite this gnawing, fearful hunger with a nibble. He put forth his lips. And then, their eyes met, really.

If there is a Heaven for heroic deeds—if Braceby's life up to that moment had been composed of whinings and betrayals—for that moment, that Heaven would have been assured him.

"Let's visit the Bird-cage."

They trudged on. His lips had touched her forehead and from her, somehow, managed to glean a smile. That it was a passable smile, Chérètte proved amply by her prompt forgetting that she had, a moment before, been vaguely conscious of its faintness. The last lap toward their embowered goal they traversed running—Chérètte in the fore, singing and leaping and laughing, and Braceby after, puffing and grim—a sad, autumnal man!

But there was sure to be an end—the most natural of all ends. Braceby, in mortal conflict for all these harsh years, with this fresh birth of Spring in his sclerotic arteries, was to fall finally into the master delusion that he was still as young as his passion—that the folly of youth was identical with youth itself. The persuasion of the blood had been accomplished so gradually and so insidiously that he was scarcely aware of its stages. At forty he had dismissed his youth; at forty-five he had said good-bye to women; now, at the brink of fifty, he was suddenly consumed by a boundless love for this girl of nineteen. The period of mocking struggle which had preceded was gone from his consciousness as the *Sturm und Drang* fades in a young man's mind before the vision of his innamorata. He remembered the reasons which had plunged him into war against love, but he saw them now as dead and empty, and he forgot their force and appositeness in the fever of his new passion.

But until such time as he should tell all, Braceby decided to continue in the fatherly rôle of the past four years. And having put a term to the part which had caused him such unutterable suffering, the pain of keeping it went out and so pleasurable did it become in the anticipation of being free of it that he almost swerved in his resolve.

He learned quickly, however, in that vague wavering, that the old state was dependent for its pleasantness upon his knowledge that it was a doomed state. So his decision to speak returned to stay.

The day he had long set for his hazardous proposal was that of his fiftieth anniversary. A desire to clinch his youth at the half-century mark was behind this choice, although Braceby was unaware of it. In his mind the resolution had been a sentimental one—the bestowal upon himself of a gift worthy of what he deemed his real advent into life. The dramatic relevance of the date attracted him, although he did not realize of what deep stuff the drama was. To him, it seemed a point in romantic comedy—an apposite first act. To the gods, it may have appeared otherwise. But Braceby was thoughtless of any otherwise. And his heedlessness was the strongest triumph of his will. He had fixed a date for his proposal because he knew that he would never rise to the climax unless he thus compelled it with a dogmatic impulse. And if he had thus chosen a day of conventional rejoicing in which to cast his die, it was to preclude any sneaking hint that there might perhaps be no cause for rejoicing after all. Braceby refused admittance to the thought of a refusal. And in his need for encouragement and for conviction, he did as men have always done—he buttressed up his resolution with a ritual, and he knocked down his doubts with starvation.

Excitement on that climacteric morning had kept him wide-eyed in bed for several hours. And then had come a heavy, violent slumber, that seemed to grapple and possess him, and which, after appeasement of its passion, flung him to consciousness with the late morning sun hot upon his face. Braceby woke with the blood surging in his body and his head cool and clear. All the time of that pulsing sleep he had been preparing and enacting a dream. And when, at last, he was hurled back into consciousness, it was upon no middle

station—no yawning, limb-stretching compromise between the trance of night and the labor of day. Nor was it with his mind bathed in the misgivings, half timid, half febrile, of the foregone evening. The brewings of that deep slumber had been both mental and physical. They had restored the steely quickness of youth to his body and engendered a defeat-ignoring confidence in his mind. Braceby jumped exultant from his covers. He stood long in the open window and allowed the May sun to pour its liquors of optimism upon his body. And then, he plunged into his icy bath. There had been a long and salutary way since that false surrender to old-age when Braceby had ordered his valet to leave closed the windows in his bedroom. A not too fastidious preparation followed, and now—he was on the stairs.

VII

CHERETTE was practicing in the living-room. The sun, glowing through the cretonne curtains of three French windows, advanced over the low-raftered chamber and touched her shoulders. She was clad in a light-blue jumper, caught in over her still boyish hips with a broad sash of a darker tint. The dress fell loosely from about her neck; and the sun beamed its last breath upon the slight disclosure of her back, whose curve it transformed into a gentle harmony of rose lights and blue shadings. The girl's fingers went over the keys with a faint suggestion of lingering longer than the *tempo* warranted. Her head was forward to one side and her eyes tilted up. In their distant gaze shone a sensuous satisfaction for the sun's caress, of which she was aware—subtly, amorously—as if it had been the worshipful glance of a lover. It is through such fair delusions as this—the dreaming of the sun's rays to be a wooer's eyes, the reading of a declaration into the low song of an evening glade—that girls prepare for their first love encounters and learn to take them

with the canny knowledge that to men seems mystical.

Braceby stood on the landing and watched. Cherette looked up to him and smiled. "Good morning, Daddie." She stopped to rise.

"Finish your piece," said Braceby.

Cherette went on, tossing her head with the sustained *Andante*. It was a different playing, now: the vivid playing before an audience. And as Braceby stood there, listening, he understood the luxurious completeness of this girl in her own life, the ease with which, in four years' space, she had absorbed all of his thoughts and all of his surroundings, and, with youth's direct assurance, made them singly and ineradicably hers. In her acts and in her air there seemed no memory of a time prior to her being here. The house and all that was within it, he and all that surged within him, had accepted her and become stamped with her. With what tacit grace she had moulded his world and attuned it to herself. How insidiously it had become a whole of which she was the heart; how perfectly her spirit had shot him through, in his present and in his past. Verily, it was as if she had been there, all of his days; and as if days had not been her measure. And now, at length, this harmony was to reach consummation. The last reserve, the last holding-off, was to be effaced. The deluded man swam in ecstasy. All of his soul had grown contiguous to this little, playing stranger. The very chairs gave forth the incense of her presence; and the trees that stooped over the wide piazza were murmurous, through the open casements, of the sweet, troubled years of their communion. It was a compelling rhythm.

The breakfast table was cleared; Cook and the man-servant had caught a train upon Braceby's gift of a day off. The couple sat by the fireplace and Braceby gleaned comfort from the silent room. He had managed with no difficulty to keep the date of his birthday a secret. They were going to lunch in the city. And now Cherette sat

ensconced in her high-backed chair, kicking the cushion below her feet, toying with her necklace of tiny pearls.

Braceby invited her to a quiet talk. Nor was Cherette loth. Such talks, however serious at their outset, were always jolly. She had a way of swerving them to express and to attain what new fancy happened to possess her fancy-ridden heart. At the end of the hour the girl had coaxed the promise that they were to lunch at a particularly fashionable restaurant for which Cherette had an evil predilection and which Braceby sought to avoid, like all his former haunts. And that was all. No word of the proposal. And a third of the appointed day was over.

They sat in the open car and watched the monotonous landscape whip past them. Braceby reasoned that the task was not a morning's one. Something in the crisp, Spring-suffused air seemed to hint a rebuke to his resolution. There was an advantage in star-drenched darkness. The sun seemed ironical, that day: a stubborn ally to the old order against the new.

It was a sumptuous luncheon—since Braceby ordered it. And it was followed by a visit to the Bronx Zoo. Cherette loved wild animals, even as she had a contempt for domestic ones. She welled a secret strain of sentiment from the sight of caged lions and space-tortured elephants. And Braceby followed, mournfully hugging his endeavor, watching the sun sink under a bank of violet-green trees and welcoming the long shadows on the sylvan walks. And so another third was gone of the appointed day. Braceby asserted his authority in order to avoid dining in town and they had a cozy late feast in their home.

And now, they were on their porch and the night was in league with Braceby, even as had been the day against him. Throughout the entire wracking trip the man had sensed a conflict. Despite himself and his convictions, he could not but feel that if the serene light of the May sun was against him—and the strained conven-

tionalism of the restaurant, and the subtle crowd-instinct of the park—they had been in favor of Cherette. And still, what he was about to do was not against his charge. Whence came this seeming antagonism, this pitting of interests against each other? Braceby could not grasp the source, so he dismissed the fact. There was no such conflict. What he was about to ask was for Cherette as well as for himself. . . .

"Cherette, I wonder if you know how I love you," he said, his voice atremble.

The girl's smile came to him, suffused with the night.

"Of course I do, Daddie."

"Do you love to call me Daddie?"

"Why, what else could I call you?"

He took her hand and kissed it—a moment too long. For Cherette withdrew it. It was the pinch of resistance necessary to compound his passion and send it plunging toward its goal, with the power of a pent-up life load, seeking its level. Braceby was to his feet and the shoulders of the girl he loved were between his hands.

"Look here," he cried, "there is something else you could call me. . . . Oh, don't you understand, Cherette? Dear little, adored Cherette. I love you—I love you."

There was a pause. A dry branch cracked from a distant tree and fell dead to the brush. The rustle of its fall was caught up in a myriad symphony of forest-life—a minute veil of sound shot through with the glowing pall of the receding woodland. And above it, rose the hot breathing of Thomas Braceby. He pressed her thin shoulders as in a vice. He refused to look down at the bewildered, canny eyes that were prepared to pierce him with their infernal irony; he wet his lips and he dashed on. And as he talked, the slowness and the measure of his words amazed the passion of his heart.

"Cherette, my darling. It hurts me—for years, it has hurt me to hear you call me *that*. It has been torture. At first it was well. That was how I loved

you then. But when I came to know you, it all changed suddenly, Cherette. And for long, I have loved you in a far deeper, far greater way. And now I can stand it no longer. I am not an old man, little girl. Never have I loved before—really, wholeheartedly—as I love you. Doesn't that make me young? What else is youth but that? See: we both stand at the same threshold—the first love. I have known women of all sorts—girls and those who were as if they never had been girls. But what have they given me? Bitterness! What have they taught me? Merely to appreciate you, to know how rare and how sublime this love is that I have for you. All else—it has but gone to prove how real, how enduring, how unbearably deep is my need of you."

He loosed her shoulders and his fists clenched in a moment's agony. And now, he bent more closely. "Is what I ask not natural? You will find me young; you will find me a real lover. For what else could you find me, since that is All—All I have become? Everything in my life that is not you has died away. I am re-awakened; no—for the first time, I am awake. I stand on a threshold. Let me in, Cherette. Say that you love me. Say that you understand."

But again there was silence. A bird carolled in the gloom and a motor went slashing through the stillness on the distant Post-road. Braceby sank down before her. His knees were not stiff and he was reckless of a damp floor. Above all, he feared this silence. It seemed to scathe and cut and there was a smile within it, as if it had been a human face. He feared to look up, lest he should find that it was the face of Cherette that had a smile. He went on, more measured of voice, more quaking of soul.

"Cherette, don't give me your answer now, if you don't care to. Above all, don't say No. If you could only feel what your Yes would mean to me! And I can make you happy—happier, beloved. Otherwise, you would have to leave me, some day. You would find

that you were not completely happy; that there was something lacking—another sort of love. Give me that! Let me give you that. Oh, if you knew what it was like, after so long a wait, to find one's desire so near and not to dare to grasp it. You are so perfect, so beautiful! And all I have—beside the grosser things—is this love, strong for a lifetime of preparation. It will transform all, Chérètte, even as it has transfigured me. Give me a chance. Become my wife!"

He held her knees in his palsied hands. His tears stained her dress. His mouth begged her hands. He loved her. And the bird ceased its gossip. And the sibilant live things of the forest were murmurously still.

Chérètte jumped from her chair; violently so that her knee struck Braceby's lip and made it bleed.

"You old fool!" she said, standing over him.

He saw her eyes. They were laughing. They were very old and very sharp. They seemed to curl up within themselves and from their immemorial retreat to dart forth a biting harmony of frost and flame. They had nothing to do with Chérètte. It seemed they, rather than she, that spoke.

"Why—you're old enough to be my father. For all I know, and for all you know—" Braceby felt what was com-

ing—felt it in the pervasive cut of pain that went through his body. And he trembled to avert it. He was helpless. The words were uttered. "—for all you know, and for all I know, you may be my father."

VIII

CHÉRÈTTE was gone. All that was left was a certain light, world-withering laugh that never had been uttered. Yet, that was all that was to stay. And that was never to be gone.

Braceby raved in his mind and writhed in his body. He wanted to protest; he wanted to cry out; he wanted to be taken back as a father. He caressed the name of "Daddie." He spat out at his fatal burst of madness which, surging over the flood-dykes, had in the moment of its ecstatic triumph sunk to nothingness on the farther side of the world. A thousand pleas and a thousand resolutions played havoc in his heart. And no sign came forth from all the bitter, inner seething.

An hour later, he found himself still kneeling on the lone verandah. His knees were stiff with aching; and the floor was soaked with the damp gall of the night.

He rose and crawled into his bed.

And the windows in his room stayed shut.



THE ideal marriage is one in which neither is in love with the other and both have unlimited bank accounts.



BARGAIN sales are founded upon the principle that when a woman has once spent fifty-one cents she doesn't care what becomes of the rest of the dollar.



THE INVERSE RATIO

By John Merlin

"WE must be carefully guarded from emotions of any amatory nature," advised the astrologers and wise men who always attended the nativity of any new-born prince of Plauria. . . .

"He is born under both the ascension and eclipse of Venus—which indicates that Venus is his dominant planet, and, at the same time, the star of his fate. Therefore he must never see a pretty woman."

The King wagged his head gravely. A taste for pretty women ran in the Royal Family. He believed in what the seers predicted, for had not his father for a time lost half the kingdom because of a stolen kiss? And had not his great-grandfather fought a three years' war because of a garter which had been stolen from his queen by a courtier who had come on a mission from a foreign capital? . . . I tell neither of these stories, for whoever is curious enough may find them in the Chronicles of the Kings of Plauria, and read them there for himself.

Therefore it came to pass that the King put credence in the prophecies of the wise men and, loving his son more than his own soul, he wished by all means to save him from the fate which threatened his prosperity, if not his very life. He knew, also, by the laws of heredity, that a family weakness grows stronger, while a family strength declines, with each succeeding generation. Nor could he abide the thought that the kingdom might come to naught because of a pair of soft, white arms, or a look cast from beneath long eyelashes. . . .

So all the pretty women were banished the realm, and everywhere it was

ugliness that bore the bell. Yet the censors had great difficulty in banishing beauty entirely, for, once ugliness became the fashion, girls were caught affecting a cast of the eye, or accentuating a defect or blemish rather than any perfection in form or feature. All of which was reasonable, and not so fantastic as it would seem. For did not the use of the Patch come from some queen's effort to hide the evidence of bad digestion, and the hoop-skirt, as a concealment of a still more obvious fault? . . .

The King's agents, were, however, relentless and thorough. They knew well that the very life of the Prince depended on the faithful discharge of their duty, so it was in vain that beauty disguised itself beneath various and ingenious masks of ill-favor and ugliness . . . every comely woman and maiden was spied out sooner or later, and set none too gently across the boundary line, while mothers watched with fear the faces of their baby daughters lest they should evince the least signs of future loveliness.

Nevertheless, the Prince did not advance into late youth without some notion of what he was missing. Every poem he read, every romance he perused, was filled with the praise and exaltation of the beauty of women. And he would often say to his mother, "Mother, what is a beautiful woman like?" And she would answer, "Son, there are no longer any beautiful women in the world . . . they all died long ago."

Thus the Prince was appeased, but not satisfied. For at night his constant dream was of beautiful women.

This alarmed the old King, who was now past the age of begetting another son. For, as custom was, the Crown Prince must marry at his twenty-first year. And the time was now at hand.

Consequently, the King sent to a Far Ruler for the hand of one of his daughters in marriage.

"And let her be the ugliest daughter you have . . . for, according to our soothsayers, my son must ever avoid beautiful women."

The Far Ruler was at first inclined to be wrathful at this request. He thought he was being made a jest of. However, after consultation with his prime minister, he decided to comply with the strange requisition; for he had a daughter who was so ugly that he could marry her off to no one. She was so ugly that no courtier could, for any preferment whatever, be moved to

call her beautiful. She was so ugly that the flowers withered a day before their time when she looked at them.

This Princess the Far Ruler, her father, sent to Plauria, with a retinue of women almost as ugly.

As the procession, after their long journey, entered the palace courtyard, the Prince stood observing them out of a window. And, beholding the Princess, the ugliest woman in the world, he was, by the very perversity of his star, struck with love and astonishment at one and the same time.

He trembled. Courtiers, seeing him falling, rushed to his support. "They have all lied to me, saying there was no more comeliness left in the world. At last I have seen a beautiful woman," he whispered.

And the doctors could do nothing for him. He died in spite of their efforts.



UPON SEEING GERALDINE FARRAR THROUGH MY EARS

By Robert H. Davis

THRILL me again with your golden throat:
 Trumpeted music to vaster worlds!
 In every soul you strike a note;
 In every heart a song unfurls.
 On every cheek a tear is born
 And every breath betrays a sigh;
 And night becomes immortal morn
 When you sing—"Butterfly."



REBUKE a wise man and he will love you—but not, one ventures, very much.



THE man who marries for love alone is at least honest—but so was Czolgosz!

THE GENTLEMAN IN THE CASE

A SOCIETY MELODRAMA

By Andrew Soutar

HERE, in the beginning, it is unreservedly admitted that Captain James Fanshawe and his wife, Marie, are unprincipled rascals who live by their wits, hoodwink the society they affect, and play the hypocrite with art so perfect that they are likely to have a long career of evil-doing without being suspected. Also it is contended that in the case of the man, at all events, there is a touch of humanity which may be taken into consideration when at last his iron nerve fails him and he comes before his judges.

To the lay and the honest mind, the amount of detail which the expert thief has to study before attempting a grand coup would be incredible. For nearly a week, Captain James Fanshawe walked Bond Street, keeping an eye on a large jewelry establishment there situated. His wife, Marie, assisted in the vigil, both acting in such a manner that the most watchful officer in plain clothes would not have had the slightest suspicion aroused in his mind. It was half-past seven on an evening in early Spring when that for which he had been watching happened. As the result of a prearranged signal, his wife, Marie, joined him, coming from the lower end of Bond Street in a taxicab. They drove together into Piccadilly, down to Hyde Park Corner, Park Lane, into Oxford Street, and back into Bond Street, thus completing a square. On the way, he put her in possession of all the details of the scheme upon which he had been engaged for some time.

"I believe that it has worked exactly as I calculated," he said. He dusted

the lapel of his coat with a glove, and gave her his silk hat to hold while he wiped his forehead. Fanshawe was a very handsome man, somewhat slightly built, but beautifully proportioned; and no man ever wore his clothes with so much credit to the tailor who cut them. For Marie, too, let it be said that her looks had evoked many a sigh of envy. As she lay back in the cab holding his hat, her big eyes sparkled with eagerness and expectation. Her admiration for Fanshawe was unbounded. With patience utterly at variance with her sex, she held her peace, neither asking a question with her lips nor inviting a word with her eyes.

"I'm sorry to have kept you in the dark so long," he said, "but I was afraid to tell you too much, in case you might be tempted to put me off my plan. Any one might have said there was a simpler way of getting hold of that black pearl necklace than the one which I devised. I might have entered the premises of the jeweler and obtained it in that way. But, my dear Marie, there are some methods in this profession which can be set down only as vulgar, and, being of a superstitious turn of mind, I sometimes think that art never forgives those who forsake her for the commonplace.

"Mr. Cyrus E. Fisher is about the one man in London who could afford to buy a ten-thousand-pound black pearl necklace for his wife. Without making any bones about the matter, Mr. Fisher is probably the one man in London who would buy such a present at the prompting of a friend—a friend

like Captain James Fanshawe. And, Marie, your husband is probably the one man in the country who could divine that all was not well between Mr. Cyrus E. Fisher and his wife, Lady Margaret. I had to exercise the greatest caution and tact while staying with them at Holmdene; but he dropped a word or two which showed me plainly where the shoe was pinching. It was you, my dear observant wife, who advised me of the existence of that necklace in Bond Street, and I came to the conclusion that afternoon, while talking to Mr. Fisher, that if I could persuade him to buy it as a peace-offering to Lady Margaret, the thing was as good as mine. He entered the shop five minutes before you drove up. . . . Thank you, my dear," and he replaced his hat on his head; and Marie, thus being freed, commenced to question him.

"Are you certain that he went into the shop to buy the necklace?"

"As I haven't been into the shop," said Fanshawe, "how am I to know that? If he didn't buy it, I'm afraid that I shall have to resort to that vulgarity of which I spoke just now. But the luck may still be with us. I'll risk it. We're going into the shop, and I will do the questioning."

The cab stopped at the door of the jeweler's. Fanshawe assisted his wife to alight. The manager of the shop came forward instantly, and bowed obsequiously to the well-dressed, dignified Fanshawe. Marie accepted the chair that was brought forward, and affecting a bored, tired expression, left her clever husband to do the rest.

Fanshawe said: "I promised my wife a present. A friend of mine informs me that you have the very thing for which I am looking—a necklace of black pearls."

The manager, clasping his hands, said: "I am sorry, sir, but I sold that necklace less than twenty minutes ago."

Fanshawe pretended to be highly annoyed. "I suppose you could get me another one like it?" he said.

"I'm afraid not," said the manager.

"Of-course, imitations are plentiful."

"Thank you," said Fanshawe, drawing himself up and infusing intense indignation into his voice. He turned to Marie. "Are you ready?" he inquired. The manager bowed them to the door.

They drove home to their flat in Eaton Circus. Fanshawe was delighted with himself. They enjoyed a capital dinner, after which he played the piano for her entertainment. Marie was not without taste; she adored Chopin, as Fanshawe played it. She sang Tosti's songs to his accompaniment. They behaved generally like a pair of lovers, as, indeed, they were; for Fanshawe was not playing the hypocrite when he told his friends that he had married the one woman in the world who could have made life possible for him. And after the music he turned down the lights, and while she sat at his feet before the fire he enlightened her further on the scheme for the procuring of the black pearl necklace.

This modern world is full of incongruities. One cannot be certain that the incongruities do not provide the most delicious spice of all. Fanshawe and his wife, as they sat together before the fire in the flat, presented a picture of completely happy union. Marie always dressed to please him. On this night she had changed her dinner dress for a rose-coloured wrapper with an edging of black fur; and as she listened to him her eyes, just half-closed, studied his handsome face. There was nothing in his manner of address to suggest the enemy to society; there was a soft, ingratiating inflection in the voice—a voice that could utter a word of command in the darkness that none would have dared disobey. The fingers that were caressing her hair as she sat at his feet were white and apparently very delicate—fingers that could have bent the barrel of the revolver that he always carried.

"We are invited to Holmdene on the twentieth, Marie. It is Lady Margaret's birthday, and a crowd of people are going down for the week-end. We

can do without the necklace until the twentieth—eh?"

"I've met Lady Margaret only once," Marie reminded him; "so, if you have any cues that need rehearsing, it might be as well, darling—"

"Lady Margaret is a study in herself," said Fanshawe. "We have been friendly for years, because of the attitude I took up when it was necessary for her to marry Mr. Cyrus E. Fisher. It was to save her father that she sacrificed herself, if one can call the marrying of a man like Fisher a sacrifice. A trifle old, I grant you, a little crude in his manners, a fellow lacking all the romance for which a young woman is supposed to yearn; but Fisher came to the rescue of her father at a very critical time. They tell me that he made his money in lumber camps, buying and selling with rare judgment. I don't know. He's a very simple-minded man, and in the conversations I've had with him he has always impressed me with his sincerity. But there's tragedy there, Marie. If only those two had a little of the love that is ours, Holmdene would be a very desirable house. And the trouble, if I am rightly informed, owes its inception to another friend of ours."

"George Darrell?" she whispered, slightly turning her head.

"How did you know that?" Fanshawe asked.

"James, dear," she said reproachfully, "don't you give me credit for any power of observation? Why, at the Millington garden party he danced attendance upon her from the beginning to the end; and people have been talking lately."

"Have they, now? Well, Marie, I think I'm right in my judgment. I don't believe that Lady Margaret entertains a single thought that is disloyal to her husband. Really, I don't. But this is a case of a woman being unable to cut the bonds of an old attachment. Darrell is a headstrong, impetuous, wholly irresponsible young man who likes the very idea of being the center of a scandal. Many a time I have felt

like taking him aside and kicking the nonsense out of him, because there's the making of a good man in Darrell."

Marie nodded sympathetically.

"You're always very nice to the boy when he comes here," she said. "In fact, I've often been nervous lest on one of those occasions when you play the heavy father to him you should let drop a hint about yourself."

"Don't be stupid, Marie," he said playfully. "Darrell is like Cyrus E. Fisher—simplicity itself. If he had reasons for suspecting me, I shouldn't have another moment's peace until I'd hidden myself away on the other side of the world. Oh no, don't worry your head about that. Let's get back to the necklace. Fisher told me that he meant to buy the thing—that was after I had talked about it—and he opened his heart to this extent: Lady Margaret has been very cold and distant of late. I believe she was unkind enough to say to the poor old fellow that she regarded herself as a slave that had been bought in the market-place."

"Of course," said Marie, in defence of her sex, "it must be a horrible position, that of the woman who marries without love in order to save her people. A woman like that must be very brave."

"True, my dear," said Fanshawe quietly, "but if she cannot add to that bravery by bearing patiently with what follows, well, what will you?"

"And do you think that Mr. Fisher has spoken to her about Darrell?"

"No, I don't think so. Of course, he must have his suspicions, for in Society there is a species of insect that lives on the joy it derives from pitying other people, well knowing that its pity is wounding. I know of one woman who said to Cyrus E. Fisher, 'Doesn't it make you jealous, Mr. Fisher, to see your handsome wife surrounded by so many young men?' And when he said, 'Why should it?' she looked at him—the poor, painted, brainless fool!—and, touching her own grey temples, said: 'I don't know, Mr. Fisher, but when we're getting on in years, strange

thoughts do assail us, don't they?" . . . But, Marie, dear, you're driving that necklace out of my mind."

She startled him by her reply to that.

"I'm not sorry, James. Like you, I'm very superstitious, and I haven't been at all keen on this black pearl necklace. Believe me, something's going to happen about that thing. Don't you think that we might do better among the crowd at Holmdene?"

"Tish!" said Fanshawe. "I've seen a list of the acceptances, and there isn't one of them that Old Shy hasn't got by the ears."

"Old Shy—again!" Marie murmured.

Fanshawe laughed grimly as he said: "Ah! Marie, that's the one man in this country that I would give ten years of my life to know thoroughly—John Anders & Co., otherwise 'Old Shy.' That man, Marie, could kill Society with fright to-night, if he wished. What a brain, to have worked up the business that is his! Everyone loathes him—and yet everyone goes to him. Old dowagers anxious to pay a gambling debt unknown to their husbands slip into his establishment like ghosts. They know before they go that the rate of interest will be extortionate—no, I'm wrong in saying that. Let's be fair. They tell me that Old Shy has a wonderful eye for discriminating between the sheep and the goats. If he thinks a woman is deliberately deceiving her husband, he'll lend the money all right, but it will be at two hundred per cent, and a sword will be hanging over that woman's head until every cent is repaid. On the other hand, I've known him to advance a couple of thousand pounds without security to a young woman who has foolishly been led into a mistake by the harpies who run bridge parties."

Without raising her head, Marie said: "Yes, I believe there is something good in Old Shy, although he's a villainous thing to look upon—isn't he? Do you remember the afternoon you and I made his acquaintance, with a view, of course, to—"

"Testing a little plan, Marie," said Fanshawe laughingly. "Yes, I remember the afternoon."

"I never told you how frightened I was that afternoon. First we were ushered into a most sumptuous reception-room, and after you sent in your card we were summoned by a thin, cadaverous clerk, on whose brow the very words 'Pound of flesh' seemed to be written in letters of blood! Then along a badly lighted corridor—"

"Marie, dear, you should write books."

"You know I'm not exaggerating, James. You told me yourself that the place made you feel creepy."

"Well, it wasn't too clean, was it?"

"It was quite clean, James—that's not the point. Along that corridor, then up stone steps, like going into a cell. Ugh! We waited in a small room. You didn't speak. I'm certain you were more nervous than I. And suddenly a shutter was pulled aside, and we looked at Old Shy! James," she shut her eyes, "if I'd gone there alone, I should have fainted, for when I saw that old, white-haired man glaring at me through tinted spectacles, I couldn't suppress a horrible fear that it was a ghoul, who would suddenly thrust his long, bony hands through an aperture and lay hold of me."

Fanshawe patted her head. "Marie," he said softly, "you seem intent on taking my mind off that necklace, and I swear to you that I never desired anything so much as I desire that. I believe that if I knew beforehand that it was going to cost me my liberty for the next ten years, I'd still go on with the plan. The confounded thing has exercised a fascination that I simply can't resist. . . . Did I tell you that Darrell will be at the birthday party?"

"Surely not?" said Marie.

"I think so, and what is more—and this is where my little wife comes into the plan—I have had the word that among the guests are one or two 'professionals.' They knew of the existence of the necklace. I'll warrant they've found out by now that Cyrus

E. Fisher was the purchaser. I always had some contempt for the professionals. They will be beneath it, if by now they haven't found out that the necklace is on its way to Holmdene. I want you to keep your eye on the professionals. I'll give the hint, but if they choose to take all suspicion from our shoulders, well, so much the worse for them."

Fanshawe moved her head from his knee and went over to the sideboard. He poured himself out a brandy and soda, and handed her a *crème-de-menthe*.

"Marie, little woman," he said with a smile, as he raised his glass, "to the twentieth, and the black pearl necklace!"

She had risen, and was standing with her back to the fireplace. She raised her glass in turn, but struck her elbow against the mantel-shelf, and the *crème-de-menthe* was spilled down her wrapper.

"James," she said petulantly, "that will cost you a new wrapper."

CHAPTER II.

HOLMDENE, viewed from the train, was a small shooting-box; when one began a tour of the place one came to the conclusion that an army corps could be hidden in its maze of corridors and rooms. Lady Margaret's birthday was one of the events of the spring. More than sixty guests were invited, and Cyrus E. Fisher appeared to have taken himself into a corner and said: "This is an occasion when all sense of proportion may be submerged. It is in honour of my wife, to please whom I will lay down my fortune if needs be." The festivities began early in the afternoon. And George Darrell was one of the first arrivals.

Darrell fitted in, fairly accurately, with the popular conception of a young man-about-town whose principal asset is an attractive face. He was beautifully valeted; after gazing at him one could visualise his "man" standing back from the finished picture, hands up-

raised, and eyes narrowly searching the polished crown for a hair on one side that might be an "extra."

During the afternoon the guests promenaded the lawns; the younger played croquet; the majority calculated the cost of Holmdene's upkeep and wondered aloud how so handsome a woman as Lady Margaret had linked her life to that of Cyrus E. Fisher.

A word about Fisher. Anyone outside the harebrained crowd at Holmdene that afternoon would have appraised him at his true worth. A really "big" man never needs to walk around with a tablet on his back, advertising his "bigness." Fisher's head and eyes and deliberate manner of speech stamped him as a man who had been intended to fill a niche. Very few of the guests that didn't contemn him, few that didn't regard him merely as a "caterer." He was a man of forty-two or -three; the face was strong, yet pathetically homely; the eyes full of entreaty, the hair brown, and crisp, and short. Captain James Fanshawe and his wife, Marie, came by way of a relief to Fisher.

"Always feel comfortable with you, Fanshawe," said the little host, "and your dear wife makes me feel that she has come to Holmdene to see me enjoy myself. . . . Doesn't Lady Margaret look younger than ever? Fanshawe, wait till you get a splash of grey on those temples of yours—you'll understand the meaning of—of loneliness."

They were walking the lawns at the time; Lady Margaret had just come down the steps from the hall when Fisher drew attention to her. All three went across the grass to meet her, but George Darrell beat them by half a minute. He had been amusing himself with a croquet party, to the left of the house, but as soon as Lady Margaret set foot on the steps he dropped his mallet and hurried towards her. The others came up in time to catch the tail-end of a compliment by Darrell on Lady Margaret's appearance. He was a young man with all the popular markings of a "blood," but the flush that

came to his cheeks when he turned to see them standing there showed at least that he lacked experience, or confidence. Lady Margaret, tall and graceful as ever, was laughing lightly at the compliment paid her. Before Fisher could introduce them, Lady Margaret held out her hand to Fanshawe's wife, and then offered it to Fanshawe himself. She called them "dear, delightful people," and was obviously quite sincere in her greeting of them. Fanshawe, half-turning, said: "Hullo, Darrell! I felt certain that you'd be here." Then, to Lady Margaret, "I often wonder how George manages to keep alive, since I'm certain he never sleeps."

"Rubbish!" said Darrell, his face more flushed than ever. "I get through an amazing lot of work in a day. Don't give me the reputation of a butterfly."

"You've got the reputation of being a light-hearted boy," said Fanshawe, in a fatherly tone, "and light-hearted boys are always a danger, in my eyes. . . . Lady Margaret, you should add your promptings to mine. I think it's about time that George brushed Bond Street off his clothes and got out into the world."

Fanshawe didn't see it, but Marie told him afterwards of the look of gratefulness that came into the eyes of Cyrus E. Fisher. Lady Margaret took the remark as a jest, and said consolingly to Darrell, "When the time comes, you'll go into the world, won't you?"

Fisher plucked Fanshawe by the sleeve. "You're going to stay the week-end with us, aren't you? Lady Margaret and I have worked out a capital programme. We'll turn the old place upside down to-night. It's going to be a real birthday party. Lady Margaret and I nearly quarrelled over the cost—"

"Really, Cyrus," said Lady Margaret, coldly, "you should be getting among your other guests. It is a duty that you owe to them."

"And, Fanshawe," said Fisher, refusing to be repressed, "when you come to the ball to-night, you'll not grudge

Cyrus E. Fisher a little credit for knowing what's what. One of the best orchestras in town, my boy, and a couple of Apache dancers straight from Paris—red-hot from the *Chat Noir*. I saw them a couple of months ago, when I went over there to do a little business, and I booked 'em straight away. Big fee, I can tell you—"

"Cyrus," came Lady Margaret's voice, "your guests will be able to judge for themselves. And there's Lady Myrtle all alone. Do go to her."

And as Fisher walked away, she turned to Fanshawe and his wife, saying: "You can't tell how pleased I am that you were able to accept the invitation. You know how I lean upon you, Captain Fanshawe, in helping to make an affair of this kind a success. . . . Your dear wife looks more charming than ever. What is the secret of it all?"

"Confidence in one another—that's all," said Fanshawe, lightly. "By the way, I'm rather interested in Mr. Fisher's story of the Apache dancers. Have they arrived?"

"Oh! they're somewhere in the grounds," said Lady Margaret, carelessly. "Very ordinary-looking persons, and, from what I have heard from Mr. Fisher, their performance is a very brutal one, though they claim for it that it is artistic. It seems to me that nowadays anything is artistic, if it isn't natural, or if it's coarse."

And then someone else came along to claim her attention, and Fanshawe and his wife, accompanied by George Darrell, sauntered among the croquet players. They talked of nothing in particular, excepting that it was always Fanshawe's privilege to jest at Darrell's expense. In a way, he was very fond of the boy, even as he had confessed in the flat. He twitted him about the life he led, his dress, the gaudiness of his neckwear, the pretty little affectations, such as developing a lisp, and wearing one end of his tie trailing over his chest; and all the while he was talking to Darrell he was tapping the hand of his wife—tapping a signal. "Mark the

Apache people. See if you know them."

The ball that night was a most sumptuous affair. Mr. Cyrus E. Fisher hadn't exaggerated in the slightest. Everything that money could buy appeared to be there for the entertainment of the guests, and even in the grounds ornamentation had been carried to excess. Big Chinese lanterns swung in the trees, glow-lamps ran around the flower-beds. It was understood that the majority of the guests would stay over the week-end, and Fanshawe and his wife, being more intimate with the host and hostess than the others, were given the room which they would have asked for, if their plans had been known and they had been made an offer. It was on the first floor, and immediately under Lady Margaret's own room. Outside Lady Margaret's window ran a balcony. From his own window Fanshawe could have reached up and touched it with a walking-stick. Mr. Fisher's room was on that second floor, but at the other side of the house.

Half an hour before the guests retired to their rooms to dress for dinner, Marie Fanshawe successfully carried out the first of the duties allotted to her by her husband. She found a moment when Lady Margaret was alone, and, stealing to her side with the pretty mannerisms of a schoolgirl about to share a confidence with an elder, she said shyly: "You ought to be the happiest woman in the world, Lady Margaret. And yet if James could afford to give such a party as this in honour of my birthday I know that he'd do it."

"I'm sure he would, child," said Lady Margaret. "You two are always my ideal lovers."

Marie said: "James bought me a beautiful bracelet for my birthday, a month ago. Do come to my room and see it! I know it's childish of me, but—"

"I'll come at once," said Lady Margaret, and placed her arm around Marie's shoulder. They went to the Fanshawes' room and saw the bracelet; and

the sequel was just as Marie had anticipated.

"And now you shall see something that Mr. Fisher has bought for me," said Lady Margaret. "Come along to my room. You shall be the first of the guests to see it."

They went upstairs, and Lady Margaret brought out a jewel-case from the dressing-table. She showed Marie the necklace of black pearls, and Marie's exclamation of delight and envy was not artifice. She was in that room probably no longer than five minutes. She went out of it with a perfect picture in her mind of the doors and positions of the furniture pieces. And while she was dressing for dinner she described the picture to Fanshawe.

"As you enter from the balcony, the dressing-table is on your right. On your left, and in the corner near the window, there is a door leading to another apartment. It may be a dressing-room. Right in front of you as you enter by the window, there is a door leading into the corridor. The bed is to the right of that door as you come in from the corridor. The dressing-room is the only difficulty—it may or may not be a dressing-room. There is a lounge chair just inside the window. You will step on it as you climb through, and it creaks if you touch the center. I tried it. Step to the left. If it is impossible to get back through the window—supposing someone comes in from the corridor—you will have to try that door on the left—the dressing-room door. I expected that she would have a safe for her jewels. I said to her, 'Are you not a little too careless with your jewels?' and she said, 'Well, you know, where would be the first place that a thief would look for my jewels?—in a safe, of course. I just leave them lying loose in my dressing-table drawers.' It is the third drawer down on the right-hand side, James."

After dinner, the ball—and there was no one so attractive as Lady Margaret herself. Captain Fanshawe led off the dancing with her as his partner. The rope of black pearls seemed to

compel every eye in the room. Marie preferred not to dance for a little while, but her ears were on the alert. Someone spoke in French behind her, as she was sitting beneath a clump of palms watching the swirl. Someone spoke to her in French, as though to test her, but although the language was as familiar to her as her own, not a muscle of her face moved. She knew that behind her were the Apache dancers, waiting the moment when they should be called upon to give an exhibition of their skill. Marie heard the man comment on the lustre of those pearls, and she smiled as she said to herself: "If there's going to be a fight for them, I think I know who'll win."

George Darrell came across the ball-room to her and asked for her dance-programme, but she tapped him playfully on the hand as he sat down, and said: "No, George, I'm afraid I'm getting too old—too old for this sort of thing—and I'm not yet thirty. Talk to me, there's a good boy. I feel lonely."

"Lonely?" said Darrell, with a sigh. "I never felt so depressed in all my life."

"Oh, the stupid boy!" cried Marie. "What's wrong with you? I thought that you were in the seventh heaven of delight."

"And I thought you were much more observant than that," said Darrell, with another sigh. She followed his eyes. They were resting on Lady Margaret's face. She whispered to him: "George, if I'd known you were going to be the ghost at this feast, I should have urged Fanshawe to get you to stay away. It seems to me that you've been spending too much time in Bond Street—or at Holmdene. You're a healthy young man. . . . Don't drop your lip like that. I'm nearly old enough to be your mother—at least, I feel as though I were—and I'm going to talk frankly to you. There are some young men who mistake a lady's kindness for privilege."

He turned to her and studied her face intently.

"What are you driving at?" he asked.

"Is there any need to ask the question?" said Marie. "I can assure you of this, that half the guests are looking at you, as much as to say, 'There's a young fool who's lost his heart to somebody.'"

"Then they're wrong," said Darrell.

"I'm glad to hear it," said Marie, quickly. "There are two persons in this house to-night who ought to make each other's life a path of roses; and they could do it, if some thoughtless people wouldn't throw down thorns."

"Really, Mrs. Fanshawe," said the boy, "I don't follow you."

"All right," said Marie, with a laugh. "You shall have the next valse," and she handed him her programme. "We'll see if dancing with the best dancer in the world—according to Captain James Fanshawe—will cheer your drooping spirits."

They danced together; and, as though Marie's words had created a fear in his mind, Darrell made no attempt to dance with Lady Margaret. Altogether, it was a most enjoyable evening, and the guests did not retire before one o'clock. Lady Margaret accompanied Mrs. Fanshawe as far as her bedroom door on the first floor. The "good nights" were said. Marie passed into her room. Fanshawe joined her. His first act was to turn out the lights and go to the window. He called her to his side.

"Look!" he said. "All the night I've been thinking about those wretched things yonder." He pointed to a clump of a dozen or more Chinese lanterns which were still burning. "I heard Fisher say to the gardener just now that he could let them burn out. What do you think of it?"

Marie looked across the drive. The lanterns were hung in the trees no more than twenty yards from the window. She said in a professional tone of voice, "If they'd put a searchlight out there, they couldn't have interfered more with our plans. They light up the whole side of the house."

He said, with annoyance: "I daren't go across and put them out, and it

never occurred to me to complain to Fisher that the light might penetrate into this room and keep us awake."

"Perhaps it was just as well you didn't," she said. "It would have sounded suspicious—at least, to my ears."

"Our luck's out, Marie."

"It's not. Hark!" and Marie laughed softly. There was a clap of thunder, and even as they stood there by the window the rain began to come down. Within five minutes the lamps were extinguished.

"I told you," said Fanshawe, gleefully, "that the black pearl necklace was designed for me. How is your nerve to-night?"

"Why ask me, James?"

"You can go up the rope all right?"

"I could climb those trees over there," she said.

"If I could do without you," he said, hesitantly, "I would."

"What you mean, James," said Marie, as she turned on the lights, "is that you'd do anything to persuade me to let you run the risk yourself. No, my dear husband—together, or not at all."

He knelt down and opened his portmanteau.

"I wish Lady Margaret hadn't been so sweet, Marie," he said. "Not that this will hurt her"—and he held up a tiny bottle. "It won't give her even a headache. And, Marie, it was my own invention."

"Don't talk about Lady Margaret," said Marie, quickly. "That's the worst of you, James—you're tact itself, up to a point, and then you jeopardise everything by stirring up the woman in me."

"All right," he said, shortly. "We need that ten thousand badly. Here's irony for you! I had a letter only this morning asking me to renew my subscription of five hundred to the Institute for Blind Workers in Metals; and the secretary sent me a pretty little example of a necklace—only of glass, it's true—made by one of the patients. I meant to show it to you before we came away. You shall see it when we get back. What's the time?"

"We've given her half-an-hour."

"Well, it'll take us half-an-hour to get ready. I don't want to waste any more time than that, in case my suspicions are correct."

"The Apache people?"

"Yes. Did you find out anything?"

"I think they're quite innocent. They did comment on the pearls, but I gathered from their conversation that they are man and wife, and very simple-minded folk, who are mightily impressed by the honour conferred on them in being brought all the way from Paris to dance at Lady Margaret's ball."

"I think you're right," he said. "Anyway, we don't want to leave anything to chance. I'll change my clothes. And, stay, I have altered the plan."

"Since when, James?"

"Two minutes ago. If there's any trouble while we are in the room, you stay there—that is, if you haven't sufficient time to get clear. I'll unlock the door leading into the corridor, then, if someone should come in, if there's a hullabaloo, you can say that you heard Lady Margaret cry and ran up the stairs and into her room to her assistance. . . . Don't be long, Marie."

He went into his dressing-room, and when he returned Marie had discarded her evening dress and put on a dark wrapper. She then selected a pair of rubber gloves from his portmanteau, and watched him do likewise. He went to the window, and with the aid of a telescopic walking-stick placed the end of a rope through the railings of the balcony and drew it back to him. Thus they had a double rope. Marie went first, and with the skill and noiselessness of an acrobat on the stage, he was by her side on the balcony within a minute.

The French window of Lady Margaret's room was opened with ridiculous ease. They passed into the darkness of the room, and not even their breathing was to be heard. No word passed between them. Each knew the duties to be carried out. Lady Margaret was asleep. Fanshawe could not

see her, could not even see the bed, but he knew that if anything was not as it should be Marie would signal him. He turned to the dressing-table. Marie reached across the pillow, and touched the lips of the sleeper with a pad. Then she made a sibilant noise which signified "All right." Fanshawe opened the drawer, and drew out a necklace-case. He opened the lid, and flashed a tiny electric torch on it for half a second—no longer. Then out went the light.

They heard a footstep in the dressing-room. Fanshawe said: "Quick! Get out—there's time." Marie slipped across the floor, passed through the window, and went down the rope. Fanshawe had time only to reach the balcony and close the French windows. Someone had come into the room, and it was a man. That man struck a match, but the flame lasted little longer than had done the light of Fanshawe's torch. The next minute he heard a rushing of feet across the floor. The door leading into the corridor was thrown open. A flood of light entered the room. He heard Cyrus Fisher's voice calling, "Who's there? Margaret! What's wrong?"

Fanshawe slipped over the balcony and went down the rope to his own room. He cut away the rope, and closed and locked the window. Marie was waiting for him in the dark.

"James. . . . All clear?"

"Quite! Listen! You'll hear the alarm in a minute. Fisher came into the room while I was waiting on the balcony. I don't know whether he saw the other man."

"It was a man, then?"

"Yes. He must have been hiding in the dressing-room."

"Did you get it?—the necklace?"

"No."

"No? James, are you mad?"

"No. I left it where it was."

"Why?"

"It was imitation."

"James!"

He turned to her with a sharp gesture.

"Did you ever know me make a mistake, Marie?"

"Didn't you see the thing when you were dancing with her?"

"Yes, I did. That *was* the real necklace. . . . Quiet! There they go!" They heard a loud shouting above their heads. "Change quickly, Marie—take your gloves off, and your goloshes. Give me my dressing-gown. Now, out we go. Leave everything to me. Don't ask questions, and don't answer any."

Together they rushed up the stairs. This time a crowd of guests had gathered outside Lady Margaret's door. When Fanshawe and his wife made their appearance Fisher cried out in relief:

"Come in, Fanshawe, quickly. Lady Margaret's unconscious. There's been a thief in the room." Then, to the servants standing near him: "You had the doors locked downstairs?"

"All of them, sir," said a servant.

"That's right. Fanshawe, what do you think of it?"

Marie was sobbing into a handkerchief, and hanging over the bed. Fanshawe raised Lady Margaret, and in less than five minutes brought her round. She sat up and laughed a little hysterically, but her nerves were good and strong, and finding that she had suffered no serious injury, she made a playful remark about the consternation that had been created in the house.

"Get the guests to their rooms, Fanshawe," said Fisher. "Tell them it's all right."

Fanshawe performed that duty, then returned. Lady Margaret was quite herself again. Fanshawe asked her if she could describe what had happened. She couldn't. She said that she hadn't been awakened. Then she pointed to the dressing-table. "The necklace—look! That is what the thief was after."

If Fanshawe was acting thoroughly, Marie's performance was superb. She crept across the room to the dressing-table with positive horror in her big eyes. There was the case where the

necklace had reposed. It was empty. She turned to look at Fisher. He was smiling.

Fanshawe said: "He got away with it!"

"No," said Fisher, "he didn't. He got away with an imitation which I bought for less than five pounds—a clever imitation. You see, Fanshawe, a man like me, who's knocked about the world a good many years, isn't always as simple as he looks. Lady Margaret said to me that you had made a remark about those Apache dancers."

Fanshawe glanced quickly at his wife.

"And, knowing that you are an astute man, I arranged with Lady Margaret that she should change her necklace when she came upstairs. The real one is in the safe in my room."

CHAPTER III.

ON the Monday evening following the festivities and alarum at Holmdene, Captain James Fanshawe and Marie, his wife, were about to sit down to a dainty, yet not expensive, dinner in their own little flat, when the servant announced Mr. George Darrell.

"Splendid!" said Fanshawe. "Serve for three." To his wife he said, in a hurried whisper: "I've been thinking about the youngster all day, Marie. Let him do the talking, if he's so inclined."

Darrell was ten years older than when they left him at Holmdene. His face lacked colour, his eyes were shifty.

"You're in trouble," said Fanshawe, "but before you breathe a word of it, let's order in the dinner; I'm famished."

They had dinner, or part of it; Darrell dropped his knife and fork on the top of a pheasant's wing to cry out: "I can't eat; my mind won't let me."

Fanshawe tapped his plate twice to warn Marie not to interfere; then, he said:

"Who's got hold of you, Darrell?"

The boy looked from face to face.

"I have no secrets from my wife," said Fanshawe, encouragingly; adding, "Marie is very fond of you."

The boy dropped his chin into his cupped hands.

"I'm all nerves," he said, jerkily, "and Old Shy knows it."

Fanshawe raised his eyebrows.

"You've been borrowing money from Old Shy—and he's putting the screw on. Eh?"

"No. I borrowed money from him, but the security was good. And yet—"

"Out with the full story, Darrell. We've helped you before—can't you trust us now? . . . Marie, close the door, darling—servants have long ears."

Darrell looked about him in a frightened, hunted manner.

"My God! I do need your help, Fanshawe," he burst out. "Old Shy has his foot on my neck, and I daren't go out of the country without confiding in you."

"Get on with it."

"I wanted five thousand—I want to get out of the country as quickly as possible, because there's a chance for me in South America if I can take advantage of it at once—"

"You're rambling," — Fanshawe's eyes were glittering strangely.

The boy took a deep breath.

"Fanshawe, you'll stand by me, won't you?" he cried impulsively.

"I'll do my best for you, my boy," said Fanshawe, and his fingers were flicking a message to Marie—a message to keep silent and wait.

"You saw that necklace of Lady Margaret's?"

"Of course." Fanshawe was watching every movement of the boy's face.

"It tempted me."

"Darrell!"

"It was my only chance; I owe Clanackty two thousand, and he has threatened me."

"Go on." Fanshawe's throat was dry; he reached for the syphon and gulped a glassful of soda.

"The necklace fascinated me. I

made up my mind to get possession of it."

"George!" It was Marie who spoke, and she shrank before the glance that her husband shot at her.

"I know I'm a blackguard," the boy whined, "but I have to get out of the country, and I had an idea that Lady Margaret would forgive me, even if she caught me in the very act."

"Did she?" Fanshawe was biting hard on the butt of his cigar.

"No. But while I was in her room—just after I had slipped the thing into my pocket—her husband, old man Fisher—came in. There was no light, for he had shut the door behind him. He leaped at me. There was enough noise to waken the dead, but I didn't hear Lady Margaret's voice during all the time I was in the room."

"Did he recognize you?"

"I think he must have done so, although we wrestled in the dark."

"You wrestled with him?"

"For a minute. I knocked him down and made my escape through the dressing-room to the roof, and so to my room on the first floor."

"You had the necklace?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"I came away this morning, unsuspected. At midday I took the risk of raising money on the cursed thing. I went to see Old Shy."

"Good Lord!"

"The old ghoul questioned me through his trap-door."

"You asked for—what?"

"Five thousand. He wanted security, and Heaven knows what rate of interest."

"You gave him the necklace?"

"Yes. That's the trouble. He was rude, vulgar, but he knew that he had me in a corner."

"You didn't tell him that you had stolen it? You were not such a fool as that?"

"I tried to bluff him, but it was useless. He said to me, 'There's only one necklace like this in all the world, and I know who owns it.'"

"And you said that you had stolen it from Lady Margaret?"

"He squeezed the truth out of me, although I started by pretending that she had commissioned me to raise money on it."

"You told him you were leaving the country?"

"Yes. But I swore that his money would be returned to him in good time."

"He examined the necklace? And, of course, refused to advance the money on it?"

"On the contrary, he jumped at it. He advanced the five thousand, but he made me sign a confession that I had stolen the beastly thing, asked me the name of the boat I intended to voyage on, and said he would send a representative to see me off. I've come to you because my nerves are all anyhow, and I don't know whether I should clear out or go to Lady Margaret and make a clean breast of it."

Fanshawe's brain was working at lightning-like speed, and the way he looked at his wife showed that he feared nothing so much as her intervention. He tapped the boy on the shoulder.

"When does the boat leave?" he asked.

"To-morrow, at noon," said Darrell.

"Then take my advice and go with it. Don't say a word to anyone—go!"

Darrell accepted the advice. Fanshawe promised to keep his secret and to wait for letters that should tell of the rake's progress in South America. And when, at last, the door closed on Darrell, Marie swung upon her husband with fire in her eyes. He raised a warning finger.

"You blundered, James!"

"I seldom do that, Marie."

"You saw that necklace in the bedroom."

"I fingered it for the fraction of a second."

"And you said it was an imitation?"

"So did Cyrus E. Fisher. I know it was an imitation."

"And yet—yet Old Shy advanced

Darrell five thousand pounds on it?"

"Apparently."

"James! Are you mad? Do you think an astute man like Old Shy would advance five thousand on a stumper? He, a man who's been handling gems all his life?"

"How often have I made a mistake, Marie? . . . What's the time? Eight-fifteen. Old Shy generally leaves his office in Albemarle Street at eight-thirty. Tell the servants to keep dinner for us, then slip on a cloak. I'll call a taxi—I want you to come with me." . . .

They were in Albemarle Street just on the half-hour. Fanshawe instructed the driver to halt his cab twenty yards past the office of Old Shy. At twenty-five minutes to nine, they saw the old fellow helped down the steps to the four-wheeled horse cab that he always affected. He walked unsteadily to the cab, his white beard seeming to flash in the light cast from the lamp in the hall of the office. The servant who had assisted him across the pavement remained for a few minutes at the door of the cab and took down a note of the last message for the night. Then, the driver whipped up the horse and drove in the direction of Piccadilly.

Fanshawe instructed his driver to keep close behind. Down past Hyde Park Corner, along Knightsbridge, then across the river. The front cab stopped. A motor car came up. Old Shy changed places from one to the other. Fanshawe's conveyance followed the motor car.

And so to . . . Holmdene!

"Watch carefully when the man gets

out of that car," said Fanshawe to his wife. They were in such a position that they could not be seen by the occupant of the car.

"Now!" whispered Fanshawe, as the door of the car was opened.

The man who stepped out of it was *Cyrus E. Fisher!*

Marie was breathless when her husband gave the order to his driver: "Knightsbridge." And she didn't speak until they were safely back in their own flat.

"Marie," said Fanshawe, as he poured himself out a brandy and soda, "we've lost the black pearl necklace, but we've gained something—a lesson in human nature. Let me explain, if you haven't already divined it. Mr. Cyrus E. Fisher is Old Shy—although I don't suppose that anyone save you and I knows it. Darrell went into Lady Margaret's room to steal the necklace. Fisher thought he was going for another purpose, and shadowed him. Fisher *did* recognise him in the darkness, and came quickly to the conclusion that he was there as a thief. When the boy approached him with the imitation necklace as a security and asked for five thousand, Old Shy advanced it, because he saw a chance of getting rid of the young rascal, and five thousand was a cheap bargain, in the circumstances. Darrell dare not come back, if he doesn't want to be arrested as a common thief. Do you follow?"

"Perfectly," said Marie, with a sob.

Fanshawe raised his glass.

"Good luck to you, Cyrus E. Fisher!"

he said.



THE objection to Puritans is not that they try to make us think as they do, but that they try to make us do as they think.



TWO PROSE TALES

By John McClure

WANDERER

NOW the spirit of unrest rose in him. He would go to see those places he had read of, in far lands where was the glamor of ancient tales and legends and a strangeness over all things. He would go because this land of common things so palled upon him here, and there was but monotony in all ways. And he went.

And then he saw what he had never known, the terrible, grim sameness of the world, that men were men here and in other places always; women, women. The rush and thunder of big cities deafened him, the noises of a strange tongue clattered at his ear, and the strange faces blurred his sight, passing before his eyes like leaves interminably.

Whereon the ache arose deep in his heart for the old, distant things, the old, far-off, familiar things, a calling of thin voices in his heart. And the old, old

dear faces, pallid in the light of memory, came back upon him there, and his thought haunted the wide plains that lay so still in moonlight, and his ears heard always in an undertone the murmuring of the old trees, the singing of the old birds, the speech of his own people. He was sad.

II

FLOWERS

I HAVE seen folk go into the fields under the blue heavens where flowers are; I have seen them walk there till they found a beautiful wee flower in a shady spot, snugly growing, smiling in Godhead; I have seen them bend over and pluck it, shake the dew from it, stick it in their buttonholes and say, "Does it not go well with my neck-tie? How does it suit my complexion?"—then walk home with it, smirking.

And this they call love of flowers.



THE JOCOSE GODS

By Owen Hatteras

WHAT humor could be wilder than that of life itself? Franz Schubert, on his deathbed, read the complete works of J. Fenimore Cooper. John Millington Synge wrote "Riders to the Sea" on a second-hand \$40 typewriter, and wore a celluloid collar. Richard Wagner made a living, during four lean years, arranging Italian opera arias for the cornet. Thomas Henry Huxley's wife called him "Hal." Herbert Spencer sang bass in a barber-shop quartette and was in love with George Eliot. William Shakespeare was a social pusher and bought him a bogus coat-of-arms. Martin Luther suffered from the jim-jams. Bismarck was afraid of his mother. The greatest soldier in Hungarian history was named Hunyadi Janos. . . .

THE GREY MOTH

By Frances Norville Chapman

ALL the way up the stairs he told himself that he was doing a foolish thing, but some impulse stronger than his own will urged his footsteps forward.

He had come home early and had gone all over the downstairs rooms. Everything met with his approval. He had given considerable thought to the rearrangement of the house, but he had bought nothing new, as he wanted Alma's choice and individuality expressed in the refurnishing, and as he went up to the second floor a little tremor shook his heart as he thought that to-morrow he would bring her there his bride.

He was glad that he had decided on the old guest rooms as their apartments. He had kept flowers in the room that would be Alma's for some days, and as he opened the door their faint, frail odor rose to meet him. He changed the water on them, moved a chair, shook the folds of a curtain into place. . . . Everything was spotless and seemed to reflect the sweet and delicate reticence that was not the least of her young charm.

He was going to be happy! He *had* been happy . . . and as he crossed the hall and opened the door to his old room he realized that he had been richer in love than most men . . . although a few years back he had felt himself the most bereft. . . .

As he raised the shade to the western window the dying sun silvered the tips of a row of Lombardy poplars that stood like sentinels at the foot of the hill. How Claire had loved them!

. . . . Claire! his wife, now dead ten years. . . . He could see her sitting in her big chair, or her slender length stretched on the chaise-longue drawn up by the open window, her tender grey eyes gazing steadily into some dim country far away . . . while he watched beside her in an agony of longing and rebellion, trying to shield her, snatch her away from the doom that crept with stealthy, relentless feet, each day a little closer. . . . A momentary spasm twisted his heart, then he thought of the brave sanity, the strong steadfastness that had never deserted her. All the years of his loneliness, the intangible gossamer fabric of her inner spirit had lived on, steadied him, given him some of that sense of mysterious equilibrium that had balanced him through every crisis of his life. She had always laughed at a little morbidity of sentiment in him . . . and to-day he felt that, if she knew, she approved and was glad that he had again found happiness.

As he watched the poplars fade to a blur of silver grey he thought how often he had sat beside her as she lay in a gown of some soft woolen stuff that he loved . . . his grey moth, he had called her playfully . . . and instantly an old memory sprang to life, and he had started for the attic stairs. . . .

He groped his way through the litter of discarded furniture and household lumber . . . he knew exactly where he had put it . . . he recalled the blind anguish that had prompted him, all the time knowing that it was a thing she would have laughed at and disapproved.

After her death her mother and his sister had taken away all of the little intimate belongings which he would have kept to aggravate his pain; he resented their interference, but had no power to actively resist. . . . Then one night in the long watches of his aching loneliness he had gotten up and found the grey gown that she had worn at the last, which they had somehow overlooked. All night he sat with it clasped to his heart, drenched it with his tears, and in the early morning he had crept up to the attic where he had folded the gown into a narrow box and thrust it away on the top shelf of an empty closet, where it had remained.

At first he had thought of it often, and knowing it was there had somehow comforted him; then as the poignancy of his sorrow subsided, he was a little ashamed . . . it was just the sort of sickly sentimentality that Claire would have hated . . . then the busy years . . . Alma . . . he had forgotten it.

As he stood with his hand on the latch of the closet a feeling of heart-sick longing swept over him. *She* had loved him once and for all; loved him with her very last breath; her dying eyes had turned to him until his tears had blotted her face from his sight.

But it hadn't been enough for him . . . to-morrow! How could he have been so traitorous to their love . . . their perfect love! . . . He opened the door quickly, he wanted to touch the soft folds of her dear grey gown, to bury his hands in it, to ask her forgiveness. . . .

As the door swung open beneath his touch, a fine film of dust arose and a flutter of wings beat about his head as some moths escaped. He reached up and lifted the box down from the shelf where it had remained undisturbed for ten years.

He carried it over to the window through which the evening light filtered with furtive pallor, and as he touched the stuff of the old gown it crumbled beneath his touch into a soft grey ash . . .

Looking up with startled face, it seemed to him that he felt Claire's tender grey eyes smiling at him whimsically, and a little teasing laugh, half sigh, melted into the silence about him.

Softly he replaced the box in its dim niche, and as softly went down the stairs. He stood in the hall irresolute for a moment, then he turned and went into the room prepared for Alma and watered the flowers afresh. . . .



HOME

By Douglas Goldring

OH, my dear, I have wandered afar and seen marvelous places
And foolish light loves have consumed me, and left me as dead—
(Bored stiff with their bleat, and big eyes, and their "flower-like faces"!)
So now I've come back to be good—with a tired head

The candle flames smile in long lines and the flowers are your choice;
And our friends are much nicer than even we thought them before!
And now, in a lull in the talk, I can hear your voice—
And the rain outside, and the long street's muffled roar

THE EVENING ADVENTURES OF A LONELY BACHELOR

By Howard P. Rockey

BROCKTON paced up and down his bachelor apartment, nervously smoking one cigarette after another. He had no dinner engagement—no one he knew was free for the evening—and he was decidedly out of sorts. He had not the slightest desire to dine alone. Brockton always preferred to go hungry rather than sit through a meal by himself. The theater did not appeal to him, nor did he feel in a mood for reading.

Vainly hoping that it might prove resultful, he consulted his Morocco leather 'phone list, but the names and numbers written there suggested no solution to his problem. Once more he took a few turns about his rooms. Then, with a sort of desperate humor, he sat down before the telephone and took off the receiver.

"Hello!" he called, impatient at the inevitable delay. "Hello!"

"Number please?" Central's voice finally came over the wires, quite ignoring his tone of annoyance. "Number please?"

"What numbers have you?" Brockton inquired with amused curiosity.

"Stop kidding!" came the imperious demand from Central. "What number do you want?"

"I'm quite sure I don't know," Brockton answered. "Weren't you calling me?"

"No," came the abrupt reply. "I beg your pardon." And the connection was shut off.

With a smile, Brockton wiggled the hook. Finally Central cut in again and

once more asked, "What number, please?"

"Haven't you any really nice numbers you can recommend?" he asked pleadingly.

"We're not allowed to give numbers to subscribers," Central answered. "Look in the book, or I'll connect you with Information, if you like."

"No," Brockton declined. "Now do be reasonable. I've not the faintest idea what number I want, but I'm very sure I want some number very much. I'm perfectly sober, but dreadfully blue. If you'll connect me with some number you think I'd like, I'll be ever so much obliged to you."

He heard a chuckle over the wire, but it was followed by an indulgent but very positive refusal to do as he requested.

"I'll tell you what to do!" Brockton said with sudden inspiration. "Just connect me with the last number you called. I'll take a chance if you will!"

There was a laugh at the other end. "You're a funny one," said Central. "I'm sorry but the rules forbid my telling you the last number I called."

"You don't need to tell me," Brockton said. "Just connect me with it—that's all."

"Honest?" Central asked. "You won't tell?"

"Honor bright!" Brockton assured her. "Go on—do it!"

There was a momentary pause—a buzzing sound over the wire—and then he heard a voice saying "Hello? Hello?"

"Greetings!" Brockton returned with a grin.

The voice was a pleasant one—a woman's and the tone was most attractive.

"Who is this?" the voice at the other end asked curiously.

"Nobody you ever heard of," Brockton answered.

There was a gasp at the other end. "Who do you want?" came the quick query.

"*You*," Brockton said promptly. "Who *are* you?"

"Who do you want?" the question came again, the inflection a bit indignant.

"I really don't know," Brockton replied. "Tell me who you *are*?"

"Tell me who *you* are or I shall hang up immediately," the voice said decisively.

"Please don't!" Brockton pleaded. "I'm Richard Brockton. Who are you?"

"Richard Brockton?" the pleasant voice repeated. "I never heard of you!"

"Possibly—even *probably* not—" Brockton admitted. "Tell me your name. Perhaps I've heard of you."

"I won't!" came the annoyed answer. "You're very impertinent. Tell me what you want at once!"

"Company," said Brockton promptly.

An exclamation of astonishment came over the wire to him. "Are you crazy?"

"I don't know—I may be. At any rate I'm crazy to see you!"

"But you can't," the voice said tantalizingly.

"Not over the wire," Brockton admitted. "I *could* see you, however."

A delightful laugh greeted this remark. "I'm almost curious to know what sort of idiot you are!" the voice told him.

"Why don't you?" Brockton suggested.

"I'm certainly tempted," she confessed.

"Thanks," said Brockton.

"Are you good-looking?" the girl asked.

"I decline to answer," said Brockton.

"Decline on the ground that it might incriminate and degrade me!"

She laughed again. "I'll risk that," she said.

"Then you're going to let me see you?" he asked eagerly.

"I haven't decided," she said hesitatingly. "It would be very foolish. I know I shouldn't like you."

"That's where you're mistaken," Brockton assured her. "I guarantee to please in every particular."

"You're egotistical!" she accused.

"Merely lonely," he corrected. "Take a chance—and give me one!" he begged.

There was a moment of silence. He waited anxiously. Then the connection was broken.

"Hey, Central!" he cried into the receiver, "I've been cut off!"

"What number?" Central asked sweetly.

"How the devil do I know!" Brockton shouted. "The one I was talking to—the one you gave me!"

Central laughed. "Oh, it's *you*!" she said with a giggle. "Just a moment."

Then, after a pause, he heard the voice again.

"Is that you?" he demanded eagerly.

"Who?" said the voice that had attracted him.

"*You*!" he shouted back insistently.

"Don't go away—*please*! If you do I shall never be able to find you again."

"Terrible!" she said with a suppressed laugh.

"Don't tease me!" he begged.

"Please tell me who you are—where you live—and how to get there—in a hurry!"

"My, such a lot of requests all at once!"

"Will you tell me?" he insisted. "Do—please! I'd get on my knees only you couldn't see me, and wouldn't know it if I did!"

She laughed heartily this time. "Give me time to think," she said.

"Why think?" he shot over the wire.

"If you do, you may repent—and I want to see you so much. If I don't prove up to specifications—if I fail to satisfy in every particular—I promise

to go away again at once. Only do give me your name and address immediately!"

"Where are you now?" the voice asked, expressing real interest for the first time.

"At home," Brockton said. "In my apartment—at Hampton Court."

"Hampton Court!" she exclaimed in surprise. "How long will it take you to walk across the street?"

"How long does it take a duck to learn to swim?"

"Show me," she answered. "Ask for apartment 36."

"Thirty-six!" he almost yelled into the telephone. "Are you a blonde—a perfect peach!—do you live on the third floor front—and do you wear a Persian lamb coat and a red toque? Do you?"

"Guilty!" she almost screamed into the telephone. "Are you a detective or a mind-reader—or have you second sight?"

But he had hung up the telephone. In two bounds he was in his bedroom, yanking off a dinner coat and rummaging in the drawers of his bureau for a white silk waistcoat and a linen tie. Whistling excitedly, he changed to evening dress, caught up his silk hat, gloves and stick, and darted out of the apartment.

II.

THE elevator man evidently thought him mad. He narrowly avoided being run down by a taxicab as he rushed across the street, and the attendant in the apartment opposite was quite sure he had to deal with a maniac as Brockton rushed into the hallway and demanded to be taken to apartment 36 without delay.

Somewhat out of breath, he pushed the bell. Embarrassed, he stood staring as the door was slowly opened and She of the Voice stood facing him, with a saucy smile upon her red lips.

"Good evening!" she said genuinely.

"Good Lord!" he returned. "You!"

She laughed at his confusion and invited him to come inside.

He did so and allowed her to take his hat and stick. Then, without speaking, she led him into the living-room, with its shaded lights and a fire burning brightly beneath the mantel. "Won't you sit down?" she invited. "And do smoke. Thank you, I will."

She took a cigarette from his case, and after holding a match for him, lit her own. Leaning back luxuriously in a great fireside chair, she looked at him as she puffed at her cigarette.

"Now," she said saucily. "Tell me—who is craziest—you or I?"

He looked at her in astonishment.

"You are wonderfully beautiful!" he said.

"You are avoiding the issue," she charged. "Answer my question."

He studied her quietly for a moment.

"Really," he said, "I don't know—that is, I am."

"Courteous, but untrue," she said. "You must think me absolutely mad."

"I think you absolutely beautiful!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm. "And I am the one who is absolutely mad—about you!"

"I'm afraid you're a bit of a Blarney," she said indulgently. "Of course, every woman likes to be flattered, but she likes it to *seem* real at least."

"Doesn't mine seem real—that is, don't you believe that I'm sincere?" he said, correcting himself. "Let me assure you that I've never been more serious in my life. Often I've watched you go in and out. Times without number I've stood at my own window and stared across at you looking out of yours. I've seen the pasty faced individual that comes here to see you so often—and I've been divided between a wild desire to meet him and thus secure an introduction to you—and an impulse to knock him into the middle of next week!"

"Clarence would be pleased!" she said; a twinkle in her big blue eyes.

"Clarence!" Brockton repeated. "I knew his name must be Clarence—or Percy! Think of a chap like that knowing you!"

He was so earnest that she could not

be offended. Instead, she merely inclined her head a little and concealed a smile behind her remarkably white, fine hand. The firelight reflected upon her hair, and somehow, Brockton got the idea that it was auburn rather than golden. That accounted for her remarkably clear complexion, too; and he suddenly recalled that he had always admired some shades of red hair. He noticed also that her black satin gown was remarkably becoming, although unusually plain, and that she wore no jewelry—no solitaire or wedding ring, he noted with relief.

A clock on the mantel struck pleasantly, and both looked up at it with a start of surprise. It was eight o'clock.

"Have you dined?" Brockton asked suddenly.

"No," she confessed, "And I must say I'm frightfully hungry."

"Let's order a fleet of taxicabs then!" he suggested at once. "That is I mean *one* taxicab—a small one—that is—I mean—let's go and get some food—meals—dinner—"

She was laughing at him. "You're a curious chap," she said.

"Absolutely idiotic!" he admitted. "You don't have to prove it—everyone knows it."

"Am I the girl you take to Sherry's or Childs'?" she asked in a bantering tone, quoting from the popular song.

"I can't get off that 'wedding-bells-are-ringing-for-you-and-me' stuff," he said, "but doesn't the song say something about the girl a fellow'd take to church when he wants—"

"To eat dinner?" she interrupted. "Church suppers are not usually satisfying."

"Really?" he said. "Never tried one. How about the Plaza?"

She shrugged. "Rather stupid, isn't it? I'd rather go some place where they have a cabaret."

"Cabaret it is then!" he agreed enthusiastically. "Get on your bonnet and shawl—I mean—"

But she was looking at him curiously, and he paused abruptly. "How did you

happen to call me up?" she asked pointedly.

"Can't tell you," he replied. "It's a deep secret."

"But I insist," she went on. "Surely you know—"

"Hadn't the faintest idea," he insisted, "but there's not the slightest use asking me for I can't tell you—not now at least, although perhaps I can—some day."

She was still doubtful, but gradually her hesitation disappeared and she went out of the room laughing. He stood there looking after her, fascinated. Suddenly it occurred to him that he had not yet learned her name, and he felt a wild desire to call out after her, but restrained himself. Then, without asking permission, he went to the telephone and instructed the hallboy to order a taxicab without delay.

Two minutes later she rejoined him, wearing the red toque and Persian lamb coat he had observed from his own window and mentioned over the telephone. It suited her wonderfully, and he gasped as he realized how pretty she really was. Quite conscious of his admiration, she rewarded him with a smile that completed his enthralment, and then they started towards the door together, his heart beating so loudly that he feared every moment she would hear it.

III.

THEY were in the hallway when the doorbell rang. The girl gave a start and paled suddenly. Brockton only smiled and suggested that it was probably the boy announcing the arrival of the taxicab, but his explanation failed to reassure her.

"Go back!" she said hurriedly, her tone uneasy and her manner worried. "Hurry back into the living-room."

"Why?" he asked. "Is Clarence coming?"

She smiled in spite of herself but the worried expression came quickly over her face again.

"Please go back," she begged, "and do be still!"

He looked at her in amazement as she fairly pushed him along the narrow hall into the room they had just left. Then, as the doorbell rang again with increasing impatience, she looked about with a frightened stare.

"In there!" she said suddenly, pointing towards a curtained doorway he had not noticed before.

"What for?" he asked, puzzled. "If it is someone you know, finding me there will be awkward, to say the least. If I am here in the room with you, ready to go out, no explanation will be necessary."

Again the bell rang, with a more pre-emptory sound this time. "Will you go—please!" she said very seriously.

Brockton wanted to laugh—wanted to protest—but he did as she told him. The portiere seemed to hide a tiny den—a room that a chance guest would be unlikely to enter, he figured. So he pushed the curtain aside and stepped in as he heard her hurry off in the direction of the front door.

It was dark in the room and he stood quite still, just over the threshold, listening. He heard the door open; heard a whispered conversation; then the door closed again and he heard nothing. For several moments he waited, his ear close to the opening of the curtains. Apparently the girl was talking outside in the common hall, fearing to let her caller enter and possibly discover the visitor already there. Brockton smiled at her caution, unable to understand her fear of having anyone see him there. Then he suddenly remembered that he knew nothing about the girl—her name, who she might be, whether or not she was married or single. And the whole situation began to be suspicious in his mind. He had confessed to being an absolute idiot, and now he felt that he had spoken the truth.

Still there was no sound in the adjoining room. He pulled the portieres aside and peered out. The apartment was vacant as far as he could see. The only noise was the chugging of a taxicab outside, and as he stood listening he heard it start off. In a flash he

was at the window in time to see the cab disappear around the corner. The street was deserted, and across the way he saw the lights in front of his own doorway.

"That's funny!" he muttered, and went back to the curtained door once more. With an impatient gesture he pulled the portieres back and peered into the room. As he did so he gave an exclamation of astonishment, and stepped back a trifle, startled by what he saw. Sitting on the edge of a divan pushed against the wall, was a girl in a dark blue kimona. In the dim reflection of the firelight, he saw that her hair was a rich auburn, her skin was fair and white, and her eyes, big and blue, stared at him with strange fascination.

"What's the game?" Brockton asked, after a moment. "Are you playing hide and seek?"

The girl continued to stare at him. There was no sign of fear in her face, but she seemed totally at a loss to account for his presence there, and she did not answer his question.

Reaching inside the door, Brockton put out his hand and switched on the electric lights. The girl blinked at him and arose slowly. Still she did not speak, but continued to gaze at him in a puzzled manner, half curious, half annoyed.

Brockton gasped and pinched himself. He was perfectly sober, and he was sure he was awake. "Did you or did you not just put me in this room and then go out through the hall door?" he demanded earnestly.

"I must have been asleep," the girl answered slowly. "Who are you?"

"Haven't the faintest idea," Brockton said with a grin. "The goat, I guess. What's the answer?"

The girl seemed annoyed. She certainly did not appear to understand. "What time is it?" she asked suddenly.

The mantel clock was striking again—a sweet little chime that Brockton supposed was intended to indicate the quarter hour.

"Eight fifteen," he answered.

A smothered exclamation escaped the girl.

"He was coming at eight!" she said.

"Who was coming at eight?" Brockton demanded.

"Clarence," the girl answered simply. "You haven't seen him have you?"

"Certainly I've seen him," Brockton said. "He's that white-faced—"

But the girl was looking at him with threatening eyes now.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" she cried, a little note of terror in her voice.

"First," Brockton interrupted, "I suggest that you tell me who *you* are. Did—or did you not—promise to go to dinner with me a few minutes ago?"

"Dinner?" the girl said, with wide-eyed amazement. "Dinner with *you*!"

"Even I!" he returned deprecatingly.

"I never saw you before in my life," the girl said with every evidence of truth.

"Then have you a twin, a sister, a double—who *did* see me only a few minutes ago?" he asked, determined to get to the bottom of the matter without further parley.

The unpleasant sounding doorbell rang and they both stood stock still. For a moment neither spoke, then the girl raised her finger warningly to her lips. The bell continued to call mercilessly, and she moved slowly towards the door of the living-room. "Wait here!" she commanded dictatorially, and in spite of his better judgment, Brockton stood still as the girl passed out into the hallway.

Once more he listened to the door open onto the common hall. Once again he heard a muffled conversation, too indistinct to be understood. Then, after several seconds, the steel door clanged and he heard footsteps coming slowly back towards him.

As they neared the end of the passage he stepped into the living-room, and to his relief, saw the girl in the kimono reappear. She paused in the doorway and smiled at Brockton, a pleasant, winning sort of smile.

"I really suppose I owe you some

sort of explanation," Brockton said, "but I'm just wondering whether you can't give a better one than I could."

She shot an indignant glance at him. "You are very impertinent!" she said. "Does it occur to you that I have every right to demand to know why you—a strange man—happen to be in my apartment uninvited at this hour in the evening?"

"Or any other hour—uninvited," he admitted, "but I was invited to come here, my dear lady."

"Who invited you?" she asked quickly.

"Really—I don't know?" he replied, embarrassed.

"Don't you think it is about time you found out?" she suggested. "I am tempted to telephone for the janitor and have you put out."

"I wouldn't," he said.

"But I *would*," she returned. "And what is more I think I *will*!"

Brockton lit a cigarette and sat down before the fire.

"Phone away," he said, resignedly.

"You brute!" she exclaimed.

"Thanks!"

"Are you going?"

"No."

She stamped her foot impatiently. It was a pretty foot in a dainty slipper, and Brockton was not slow to notice it. Also, he observed that it was not a boudoir slipper. The idea struck him strangely. Then, suddenly, something else dawned upon him. The other shoe, now visible beneath the folds of her kimono, was not the mate of the one that had first attracted his attention.

She looked down at the floor and discovered the cause of his close observation. A little exclamation of annoyance escaped her, and she dropped into a chair, carefully concealing her feet beneath her flowing gown.

He smiled, and she returned his smile frankly. Thus encouraged, he tossed his cigarette into the fire and looked squarely into her big blue eyes.

"Now see here," he began pleasantly. "We can't possibly measure this situation by any known rules of convention

or otherwise civilized social procedure. Either you are who you are, or somebody else."

"Granted," she said with a suppressed giggle.

"So far as I am able to determine at the present moment, I am myself," he continued. "To the best of my knowledge, in formation and belief, I am Richard Brockton; single, white, thirty-four years of age, disgracefully lazy, and correspondingly rich. Who are you?"

"None of your business!" she snapped, good humoredly, however.

"You're not fair!" he protested.

"I'm whatever I please to be," she told him. "Why should I tell *you* who I am?"

"Because it's rather more or less important that I should know," he said. "If *you* told me that I might come here—over the 'phone, a little while ago—I'm perfectly justified in staying. If you're *not* that girl, I really ought to go and try to find the girl who *did* tell me to come."

"That sounds reasonable," she admitted.

"Then in the name of all that's merciful—tell me!" he exclaimed, leaning forward.

She was about to speak when the telephone rang. It jingled quietly at first. Then, as the two stared at it, the instrument began a long howl that refused to be quieted, and at last she arose and took the receiver off the hook.

Brockton sat silently watching her. He was prepared for anything, and in view of recent events, declined to speculate upon the probable identity of the caller.

"No—you can't come up!" the girl said into the instrument. "Really—I mean it—you mustn't! Oh—no!" Then she turned a frightened face to Brockton.

"You must hide!" she said hastily.

"Hide!" he almost shrieked. "Never!"

"But you must—at once!" she insisted.

"Impossible!" Brockton retorted.

"Impossible nothing!" said the girl. "Hide—do you hear—hide!"

"Where?" he asked, hopelessly. "No—not in there!" he added glancing towards the den.

"Here then!" she said suddenly, thrusting him towards a bolted door, which she hastily opened before him. "There—quick!"

A draught of cold air struck him, he felt himself pushed out, and then the door closed after him. He was on a fire escape leading down into an inner court of the house.

IV.

To descend was impossible. He had heard of elaborate burglar alarm systems. He would probably be caught by the janitor at the foot of the iron stairs, and be hauled away to the police station as a thief. Swearing under his breath, he turned with the intention of pounding upon the door to attract the girl's attention; but, upon second thought he gave up the idea as ill-advised.

The night air was chilly, and without hat or coat, he stood there shivering. He looked upwards. It was four flights to the roof, and to gain it he would have to pass the windows of several other apartments. An alarm would undoubtedly result from such a proceeding, and he would then be even worse off than he was now. Clearly, for the present, there was nothing to do but wait until the girl within should dismiss her unexpected caller and summon him inside again. He had been bored—he had longed for diversion and excitement. He was certainly getting it with a vengeance, and he made a mental vow that never in his life—under any circumstances—would he ever use a telephone again.

Finally his impatience got the better of him. He would wait there no longer, shivering in the cold, but would beat upon the door, imperatively demanding admittance to the warmth of the apartment within. With hand upraised, he hesitated. Far below he heard a sus-

picious sound. Someone was climbing softly up the fire-escape, and he paused to peer down between the cracks in the iron stairway.

A dark figure was mounting cautiously, floor by floor—holding on for dear life, yet approaching surely though slowly. Perhaps the police were on his trail. It might only be the janitor—but he was taking no chances. So Brockton crouched in the corner shadow and waited breathlessly, every sense alert to anticipate the next move of the approaching enemy.

At last the climber turned the last landing and began to mount the short flight from the floor below. To his astonishment, Brockton caught a flash of deep red. The rest of the figure was shrouded in darkness. Then, by the light from the apartment below, he saw a strange form endeavoring to step in a sprightly fashion in spite of a long Persian lamb coat—and beneath a saucy red toque was a head of auburn hair that glistened in the faint reflection of the light within.

It was The Girl!

Now her frightened eyes caught a glimpse of Brockton, and she paused half way up the difficult stair. She seemed panic-stricken and half turned, as though intending to retrace her steps and descend at once.

"Hello!" Brockton called, his teeth chattering. "What on earth are you doing here?"

"Ditto?" asked the girl, somewhat out of breath after her exertion.

She was almost on the level with the narrow platform now, and he reached out his hand to steady her as she swayed a little. It was well that he did so, for she stumbled and would have fallen but for his strong hold upon her arm.

A little exclamation of annoyance escaped her, however, and a moment later Brockton heard a faint click on the pavement below. He looked at her questioningly and caught the twinkle in her eyes.

"I lost my slipper," she said, and sat down on the narrow stair.

Looking down he caught sight of a tiny stockinged foot—and there was a wee hole in the toe of the silk hosiery.

"I'll get it for you," he said gallantly. "Just wait a moment."

"But you mustn't go down there!" she protested immediately.

"Why?" he asked.

"They'll think you are a burglar!"

"And you?" he queried. "Did they imagine you were the ashman?"

She laughed, and the laugh quieted his rising temper. "Don't be foolish!" he said. "You can't climb back with only one shoe, and you'll surely catch cold if you sit here without one!"

For a moment she seemed to hesitate. Then she apparently agreed with him as to the necessity of recovering the lost slipper. "Take this, then," she said quickly, slipping out of her coat. "Put on my coat—and my hat—and they'll never know you."

In blank amazement, Brockton stared at the girl. Unbelievable as it seemed, she was forcing him into her fur coat and a moment later she had clapped the red toque upon his bare head.

"I can't climb down in these things!" he exclaimed. "It's absurd!"

"You must!" she insisted, and gave him a gentle push. Somewhat used to absurdities by this time, Brockton did not stop to argue. He began to descend at once, but she called down to him softly. "Don't try to come back this way," she said. "It is too risky. I will go in through the fire-escape door. Make your way around to the main entrance and come up by the elevator. Ring the bell. Then come in and restore my slipper to me."

Brockton stared up at her at loss to find a suitable answer. Was the girl crazy or was he? Never in his life had he heard of or attempted anything so utterly silly. Yet the girl's expression was serious, and even as he looked up in the vain hope of finding some solution to the problem, she disappeared through the door that led into the apartment.

There was nothing to do but follow the instructions she had given him.

Hampered by the long coat and the necessity of holding on to the red toque she had placed upon his head, he descended the fire-escape with difficulty. Fortunately most of the shades at the lower windows were drawn, and as he passed other apartments, the occupants were either out or failed to notice him. At last, with a sigh of relief, he reached the courtyard below.

For a moment he stood huddled against the bottom of the fire-escape, listening—fearing that his descent had been discovered. Then, reassured, he began to search about, and shortly discovered the slipper the girl had dropped. It was a little slipper, and as he examined it in the dim light of the court, it seemed to match one of those he had seen on the girl in the blue kimono. At any rate it was the only slipper in the court, and he stuffed it into his pocket.

Then he sought the exit, and after glancing about, saw a passage, dark and narrow, at his right. Entering it, he saw a faint light at the far end, and hurrying through the damp corridor, in which his footsteps echoed strangely, he presently emerged upon the street. At the outlet he hesitated a moment, looking to the right and left, to make sure that no one would observe his exit. Then, looking across the way, he saw the lights of his own apartment house, and his first inclination was to hurry there and forget the whole adventure.

Curiosity, and the consciousness of his strange garb deterred him, however, and he quietly edged his way along the wall of the building towards the main entrance. A taxicab was chugging before the door, and he realized that he must play a part in order to avoid suspicion. Pausing a second, he tried to recollect the particular method of walking the owner of the coat and hat he wore, affected. His effort was curious to say the least, but he made it.

Self-conscious and nervous, he entered the hallway. A man in overalls was standing just inside the iron grating, and the fellow gave Brockton a searching glance as he approached.

Brockton did his best. He bowed his head and attempted to sweep by with a demure bearing, as though resenting the stare of the person in overalls. But the Superintendent, who had once been a patrolman on the finest force, at once spotted the corded trousers that emerged from beneath the Persian lamb coat. Scenting mystery, the overalled person drew nearer and touched Brockton upon the arm.

With what was intended to be an imitation of a woman's scream, Brockton drew away and attempted to rush into the elevator, but the Superintendent, with a quick motion, extended a heavy brogan and tripped the runner neatly. The red toque flew wide and landed on the telephone board. The coat came open, revealing Brockton's evening clothes, and Brockton himself went headlong upon the marble floor. As he did so, to complete the exposure and increase his difficulties, the girl's patent-leather slipper dropped from his pocket and the Superintendent picked it up.

"Whata t'ell!" the Superintendent gasped, as he gazed at the dainty shoe with its cut-steel buckle.

"Golly!" yelled the elevator servitor, and turned almost white as he retreated into the car and slammed the grated door.

With a cry of pain, Brockton picked himself up and stared into the face of a pale young man in a dinner coat, who now stood beside the Superintendent.

"Clarence!" Brockton exclaimed, with a grin that his mortification could not down.

The white-faced young man stared at him in perplexity. Then he turned to the Superintendent.

"I saw this man emerge from the hallway just now," he said. "He is quite evidently a sneak thief. This coat—this hat—this slipper—he has stolen them all!" And he took the little shoe from the big hand of the Superintendent, turning it over and over as though trying to find some explanation inside it.

"Nonsense!" Brockton said impati-

ently. "I am on my way to restore this slipper to the lady who lost it."

"Prince Charming seeking Cinderella, I assume," said the pale young man, in a superior tone.

"Bah!" Brockton shouted in his face.

The pale young man shrank back under Brockton's threatening gaze, but the brawny Superintendent was in no way intimidated.

"Phone for a cop!" he said abruptly to the ecru youth still hiding behind the elevator grating.

"Police nothing!" Brockton said angrily. "Take me up to Apartment 36 and I'll explain everything."

Yet as he spoke, his heart sank. The occupants of Apartment 36 had proved uncertain quantities. He wondered whether he could explain satisfactorily even if he should be permitted to go there.

"The lady to whom this coat belongs lives in 36," he said in spite of his fears.

"That is true," the callow youth admitted. "She just stepped from my taxicab outside."

The elevator boy was staring at him. "She didn't come in here, sir," he said.

"What!" demanded her self-styled escort. "You're crazy!"

"Mebbe!" the negro faltered. "Either that or I've debbil-crossed!"

"Of course she didn't come in here," Brockton broke in. "She went up the fire-escape."

All three men before him stared at Brockton as though he were out of his mind.

"Up the fire-escape?" the pale youth said incredulously.

"Clean batty!" the Superintendent commented.

"Take me up stairs and prove it!" Brockton challenged.

The outer door opened and two women with a man entered. With a swift glance, the four men took in the little group and all decided that flight would be the wisest course.

"Better keep this quiet," the Superintendent suggested, "take us up to 36, Sam."

Then they piled into the elevator and a minute later stood before the door of the mysterious apartment.

The pale young man rang the bell—and they waited. Impatiently he rang again—and then again. An expression of anxiety came over his face, and, if possible, he grew still paler.

He glanced threateningly at Brockton and the Superintendent's expression grew grave. The negro was plainly excited, and as another continued ringing brought no response, even Brockton began to grow annoyed. Still there was no answer—no sound within.

The Superintendent started to beat loudly upon the door, and from other doors opening on the hall, startled, anxious faces began to appear. Whispers of burglars—of fire—of murder—began to circulate.

"You were in this apartment only a few minutes ago?" the pale young man demanded of Brockton.

Brockton nodded. "I was," he said. "For Heaven's sake force the door!"

The others echoed his sentiment, and from the depths of his overalls the Superintendent drew a bunch of keys. Selecting the proper pass-key, he quickly unlocked the door and with a rush, the little group entered. With a feeling of terror they ran along the long hall into the brilliantly lighted living-room.

It was deserted!

V.

WITHOUT a word the four men began to search the apartment. There was no one there. Brockton opened the fire-escape door and looked out. The landing was empty.

"Murderer! Thief! Kidnapper!" yelled the pale young man.

"What were you doin' here?" demanded the Superintendent of Brockton. "And where are the people that live in this apartment?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," Brockton answered, as much mystified as anyone.

"Then we'll let the cops figure it out," declared the Superintendent. "Sam,

run down to the corner and see if there's one on fixed post."

The negro turned to go, but as he did so, there was a rustle of skirts in the hall, and two figures appeared in the doorway—two remarkably pretty girls—alike as two peaches—almost convulsed with laughter. One of them, Brockton noticed, was minus one slipper.

Speechless, he stared at them, and the one who had lost her shoe stepped forward, taking it from the hand of the pale young man and slipping it on hastily.

"Marion!" he exclaimed. "What on earth have you and Vi been doing? What has happened?"

The girl grinned at him saucily. "We've *done* it, Clarence!" she announced in triumph.

"Done what?" he demanded.

"Don't be so serious, goose!"

"Serious! Great Scott!"

Marion turned to the superintendent and the elevator boy. "We won't need you—really," she said. "Would you mind shutting the door as you go out?"

The two retired reluctantly, and the girls turned to face Clarence once more.

"It's all been a joke," Vi declared.

"Joke?" Clarence repeated. "I don't see it."

"Of course not—it's on you—and on Mr. Brockton, unfortunately."

"Oh, don't mind me!" Brockton protested.

"You see, Vi is engaged to Clarence," Marion went on. "He is an author—perhaps you've heard of him—Clarence Paddington Boggs?"

"Guilty!" exclaimed Brockton. "I've read some of his stuff in *THE SMART SET*."

"Well," Marion continued. "Clarence was going to take Vi out to dinner. She was all ready when you called up. Clarence had telephoned only a few minutes before. Then we decided on our plan. The chance was too good to miss! I met you when you came in. When Clarence came, I went out with him, and Vi pretended to be asleep in the den.

"When I told you I'd forgotten my gloves," she explained to Clarence, "it was merely a bluff to get back here. Vi came to the door, and in the hallway I hurriedly exchanged her coat and hat—which I was wearing—for the kimono she had on over her gown. Then she went downstairs and joined you, Clarence. So far as *you* knew, Mr. Brockton, it was the same girl who returned, and shortly after answered the telephone. Meanwhile, I had slipped downstairs, and instead of rejoining Clarence ran around to the pay station at the corner to call up Vi."

Brockton gave a low whistle, more perplexed than ever.

"Having telephoned Vi the cue to put you out on the fire-escape," Marion proceeded, "I came back, and avoiding Clarence in the taxicab, sneaked into the court and up the fire-escape, where I met you and dropped my slipper—on purpose, of course. When you started down to get my shoe I called Vi. Together we watched you, and waiting until you were out in the street, we both climbed down the fire-escape."

"But what on earth did you do that for and give us such a scare when we came up and found the apartment empty?" Clarence demanded.

Both girls laughed.

"It's all your fault, Clarence," Vi said. "Don't you remember your little lecture the other night—on short story construction? And how you said that every plot had to have a logical solution—that nothing was ever done without a reasonable motive?"

"Well?" he demanded, "what of it?"

"We wanted to give you a test," answered Marion sweetly. "You and your theory. Where is your logic now?"

"And your reasonable motive?" added Vi.

Clarence retired behind his judicial frown, but Brockton was laughing heartily.

"The next time you want to make an experiment," he said, glancing wickedly at Clarence, "well—try me again!"

"Ahem!" said Clarence.

THE YOUTH APOLOGIZES TO THOSE OF MATURE YEARS

By John McClure

I CANNOT help it. You laugh with curled lips at my singing. (Such curls I ha' seen aforetime in withered leaves of a forest.) You make mock of my dreaming with crook'd fingers. (Such crooks I ha' seen aforetime in withered, withered twigs.) All this you do, scoffing. I cannot help it.

One day, which is not far hence (for

the dream is wind) shall my teeth likewise be fallen, my hair faded, and the skin o' my face parched. Some day shall I be likewise a dried thing.

But leave me now sing o' my dreams and this love. I cannot help it. Soon enough (for the dream is wind) shall I be likewise a wisp of pale meadow-grass that has withered.



A NICE AFFECTIONATE GIRL

By R. B. Carlton

I KNOW a nice affectionate girl
Who goes about
Patting beefsteaks on the back
Running her fingers fondly through the beards of oysters,
Holding hands for hours with breaded veal cutlets
Rubbing noses with pork chops
And having affairs with boiled onions.
Her emotional eyes light with amorous interest
In the presence of food;
They fill with great glistening tears
When the plates are taken out
And she sits despondent
Weeping gently into her coffee.



THE lucky man is the one who is not even invited to the wedding.



IS ANYONE SAFE?

By Robert Russell

I HASTEN to state that I am a most conventional man. This, lest someone might do me the injustice of thinking that I am in the habit of looking for the sort of thing in which I participated that glorious spring afternoon, with a view to relating it in boastful vein to the fellows at the club.

I took the street car in the heart of the city, intending to ride to the end of the line, which, I had been told, brought one quite into the woods. I realize that a street car ride is rather common, but the half-formed determination in my mind to alter completely my attitude toward life, impelled me to do this unusual thing. I had practically decided that, in the future, I should abandon the conservative, dark colors, in which it had been my wont to clothe myself, for the more startling browns, greens and stripes which were being affected by men of really discriminating taste. It was to convince myself that I was making no mistake in this decision, that I sought nature's solitude *via* the street car.

We already had reached that portion of the outlying district, noticeable for the freshly green lawns which surrounded the really attractive cottages, when I realized suddenly that I was guilty of doing a most outrageous thing. I was staring at the back of a young woman in the seat directly in front of me! I could excuse myself, to myself, were it not for the fact that my gaze had changed from an absent-minded contemplation, to a decidedly admiring look of approval. Needless to say I endeavored to remove my gaze

from the perfectly fitting, essentially smart waist that tried to unindividualize the broad, alluringly feminine shoulders, but the brute humanness which, I suppose, lies dormant in every man, kept drawing my eyes back to the outlines which had so appealed to my baser nature.

I had quite forgotten the important matter which had taken me into this strange part of the country, by the time we reached the end of the line, and in extenuation of my conduct I desire to state that I was heartily ashamed of myself, and was firm in the resolve to banish from my mind completely all thought of the remarkable sensation the young woman's near presence had created.

I was directly behind her as we rose to leave the car, descended and stood a moment in the spring dampness of the road. I had not seen her face, but her slow movements, her really royal carriage did not tend to assist me in eliminating the startling impression my first sight of her had made upon me.

Almost immediately she started forward in the direction of the woods, into which a path led, and I watched her in what, I know, must have been the rudest, most bold manner.

At the very edge of the woods she dropped her handkerchief! Instinct, naturally, impelled me toward the bit of white there on the path. Then I stopped, wondering whether I were honest with myself in desiring merely to do the young woman a favor, or whether there had not entered into my heart a most reprehensible eagerness to

see her face and hear her voice. I did a most unaccustomed thing—I allowed impulse to command me.

With the agility which had been no part of my habit since the days, some ten years before, when I had permitted the rather crude enthusiasm of college spirit influence me to represent my university on the football team, I darted through the mud, picked up the handkerchief, pursued her along the path and, halting her with an exclamation, returned the thing of lace to her hand. And in the moment she turned to me, I knew, and was shamelessly glad of the knowledge, that my fore-vision of what her face, her direct presence could be, had been perfect.

She took the handkerchief with a low word of thanks, meanwhile looking at me! I'm not going to describe her. The words which have seemed always to convey the proper impression of the women I have met at numerous social functions, are entirely inadequate to picture the almost immodest natural grandeur of her face and form. Why it was, as I looked at her, that I felt a bit proud and glad that I had achieved some notoriety as an athlete, is quite beyond my comprehension. I seemed to feel that her eyes had appraised me most thoroughly, and I had an uncomfortable consciousness that, in addition to having discerned that I was what is called a gentleman, she had looked deeper and become aware of the secret, perhaps vulgar roughness of sentiment which, in occasional moments I knew I possessed, but of which my acquaintances were in absolute ignorance.

Presently she turned, and, with a smile that quite accorded with her personality, disappeared down the path into the woods. I trust that it is unnecessary for me to add that I did quite the proper thing, abandoning my idea of seeking the solitude of the trees, and retracing my steps in the direction of the car-line. It would have been inconceivable for a gentleman to give even the appearance of following her. But honesty compels me to admit that I

turned away from the enticing shade of the leaves most reluctantly.

And in a moment, I forgot absolutely all my fixed rules of correct living. I had no more than reached the edge of the little wood when I heard footsteps behind me. Turning, I beheld the wonderful woman bending over the path in the exact spot from which I had rescued her handkerchief, and placing thereon the little article of cloth and softness. Then, without a glance in my direction, she was lost again in the shadows of the wood.

A forgotten chord in my brain cried out 6—14—32, the old signal that, ten years before, used to inform me that I was expected to lower my head, and, like the brute that I was temporarily, crash through the opposing line of football players between guard and tackle. I obeyed the old signal.

Now I was in the wood again—following her—yes, following her. I did not allow myself to think. It could not be possible that she had seen me at all, or that she had returned and executed this most remarkable manoeuvre with any ulterior motive with which I had anything to do. But, in the same way in which I had once played ten minutes of a game completely off my head yet obeying the complicated signals, so now I allowed myself to be guided by something within me which I did not understand in the slightest.

I walked slowly. After ten minutes, during which time the seductive restfulness of the place added to my already unnatural mental condition, I found myself passing a most artistic, homelike, tiny cottage which looked as though it would eventually be crushed to ruins by the expanding trunks of the close growing trees. And in the door of the cot she stood.

"I have been waiting for you," she said. "Will you have a cup of tea with me?"

Have I made it clear that in spite of the glowing physical perfection of her, she was so far removed from anything common that even the spot of mud on one of her exquisite boots seemed to

appreciate the honor of its resting place? Yet those were her words!

Perhaps never have I felt quite so thoroughly the primitive man, as when I crossed the threshold of that cottage and in response to her gracious motion, seated myself in a rough easy chair near the old-fashioned fireplace.

"I am afraid that there is no wood cut," she continued in a matter-of-fact tone, though nothing her voice expressed could justify that adjective as I had always understood it. "So would you mind gathering some little branches or chips?"

I wanted to tell her something—to say that I understood thoroughly the strange situation, and thought it very natural; but as the words came to my mind I realized how utterly needless it was to assure her of anything. I rose, passed out of the cottage, and presently returned with an armful of dry wood, of which there was plenty scattered about among the trees.

Moreover, I built the first fire I had constructed in years, and was astonished at the satisfaction it gave me to see that it would really burn. Then she hung the teapot on a wire arrangement above the blaze, and presently the water in it was sizzling faintly while the amazing creature and I sat looking at the queer things formed in the flames.

It will be noticed that I had said nothing. What was there to say? Strangely enough, I was possessed with a terrible fear that any words of mine would bring the experience—the atmosphere—down to that of something one had read or heard of before, and I was quite sure that such a thing had never happened in exactly the same way, with exactly the same sort of people.

But I am sure that she was about to speak again, when the little room was darkened just a bit, and I was conscious of a strange presence. The girl did not move, but I looked toward the door, and there, shutting out the sunlight, stood a man!

Even in the rather shadowy light I saw at once that he was quite correct. He might have stepped into a drawing-

room just as he was, and, had I known him, I would have been glad to present him to my friends, confident that he would say and do exactly the proper thing. Incongruously enough the thought came to me that never could he have played football. Moreover, I felt that he would have disapproved, quite properly, of my actions with reference to the girl.

Before I had time to follow out the crude impulse that came to me, somewhat roughly to inquire his business, he spoke. His manner and voice were absolutely the thing.

"Will you introduce me to your—friend, Eleanor?" he asked.

"I do not know his name," came her astounding reply, her eyes still on the mischievous flames.

"Ah," from the man.

I realize that the most unsophisticated of men would have done or said something under like conditions, but I submit that the most uncannily inspired inaction on my part in saying nothing at that moment, was the highest expression of tact I have ever attained.

"Is it your custom," the man went on, "to entertain unknown gentlemen in this little playhouse of yours?"

"It is my custom," said the girl very slowly, "to do the things which that very little part of me which I wholly respect tells me are right."

Something out of a so different past spoke through my lips in my most conventional manner, but probably I was the most surprised person in the room when the sentence was completed.

"And it has occurred to me," said the thing within myself, "that the 'unknown gentleman' is quite well acquainted with that 'very little part' of my hostess to which she has referred."

The girl turned her eyes from the flames now for the first time, and in her look I saw more understanding of the words we all had just heard, than I myself possessed.

The man broke the ensuing silence.

"In that case," he said, "and in view of the present circumstances of which

—I cannot help saying it—I disapprove most heartily, Eleanor, it remains for me but to bid you a most permanent farewell.”

He allowed the sunshine to pour once more into the dim room. My impulse to follow him was checked by the slightest movement of the girl's arm, and again we sat silent before the queer little fire.

As I watched her the change came. Strength, self-sufficiency seemed to glide from her and, to my imagination, so long repressed, came the certainty that those qualities of her had bred their counterparts in the person that had been I.

“You haven't asked what it all has meant,” she said presently. “Someway it seems as though you hadn't allowed yourself even to wonder.”

“Someone who knew what he was talking about said that I understood a wonderful part of you,” was my reply. “It would be disloyal to wonder.”

The superficial blaze had died now. Only dead ashes met her gaze as she spoke.

“I had intended to laugh it off when I had used you,” came the words, “but I, too, feel something to be loyal to—that understanding which I have never met before—and trust. It is all very simple. I was engaged to the man who has just left us. Convention—the proper thing—these rule his life.”

“They—have—ruled—mine,” I stammered.

She smiled, and one would fancy almost that she believed she knew better than that—Heaven knows I had spoken truly.

“He simply would not leave me alone,” she went on, “and yet his courtesy, his tact was so perfect, that, as a woman of the world—the so-called society world—I could not take offense. It was unbearable. Never had I done an unconventional thing in my life. That fact, and, I suppose, the material aspect of—of me, made him think that he cared. My life was one continual fight to give him a reason why we

should not marry—to convince myself that there was a reason.”

She was speaking very softly, and yet through my brain kept rushing thoughts of physical conflict, the plunge into the struggling mass of football players, the joy of a few yards gained. Her voice came again.

“To-day, coming to this little place where I spend many hours alone, I saw you. Perhaps you had nothing to do with the inspiration, or perhaps you had. I knew that he would follow me here. To make sure I left my handkerchief where he would find it. I wanted him to see you, a stranger, here with me. I wanted you to be nervous, not to understand, to make a scene—for these reasons I did not tell you why I asked you to have tea with me. I knew that the one thing that would drive him from me—that would free me, was the knowledge that I had committed a sin against the conventions—not to call my action by a worse name. That I did. You made no scene; you were not nervous—yet the thing is done. I am free. I thank you, sir.”

She was standing before me, her hand outstretched. I believe I took it in both mine—and I wasn't thinking of football rushes at that moment. Moreover, my reply was a bit ridiculous.

“Has it occurred to you,” I said, “that you haven't given me the tea of which you invited me to partake?”

* * *

All this happened two years ago. Perhaps I have grown a bit less conventional—less of a stickler for the inflexibility of the orthodox rules of what is proper, for only to-day, when I heard her speaking quite savagely to the nurse for being a trifle quick with our son, I felt absolutely no impropriety in her flagrant breach of what I know to be the proper dignity to be observed in one's manner of treating one's servants. I might add, also, that I have become quite addicted to browns and greens in the matter of clothes, these being the favorite colors of that amazing creature, my wife.

HOW I DISCOVERED BERNARD SHAW

By Frank Harris

IT was in September, 1894, that I bought *The Saturday Review* and set myself to get the ablest men of the time to write for it, careless what their opinions might be.

Most newspaper men in London had heard of G. B. S.: his initials stuck in the mind because they were the same, or very like, those given to a famous pipe and advertised till they had become a household word. George Bernard Shaw profited by the coincidence. At this time he was writing on music for *The Star*, a cheap Radical evening paper, and spouting socialism wherever he could get a hearing; the last man to be connected with an English Conservative weekly.

I had listened to him once or twice and thought him an able iconoclast with no profound originality, but a saving grace of humor. From time to time, too, I had read his articles on music and while admiring the common sense of them and the satiric light he threw on pompous pretenses and unrealities, I noticed that he had begun to repeat himself, as if he had said all he had to say on music.

What should I ask him to write about? What was his true vein? He had as much humor as Wilde—the name at once crystallized my feeling—that was what Shaw should do, I said to myself, write on the theater, in essence his talent, like Wilde's, was theatrical, almost wholly in caricature, certain, therefore, to carry across the footlights and have an immediate effect.

I wrote to him at once, telling him my opinion of his true talent and asking him to write a weekly article for *The Saturday*.

He answered immediately; a letter somewhat after this fashion:

"How the Dickens you knew that my thoughts had been turning to the theater of late and that I'd willingly occupy myself with it exclusively for some time to come I can't imagine. But you've hit the clout as the Elizabethans used to say and if you can afford to pay me regularly, I'm your man for so long as the job suits me and I suit the job. What can you afford to give?"

My answer was equally prompt and to the point:

"I can afford to give you £6 or \$30 a week, twice our usual price. If that appeals to you, start in at once; bring me your first article by next Wednesday and we'll have a final pow-wow."

On the Wednesday Shaw turned up with the article and I had a good look at him and a good talk with him. Shaw at this time was about thirty-five; very tall, over six feet in height and thin to angularity; a long bony face, corresponding to a tendency to get to bed-rock everywhere; rufous fair hair and long unkempt reddish beard; grey blue English eyes with straight eyebrows tending a little upwards from the nose and lending Mephistophelian sarcasm to the alert keen expression. He was dressed carelessly in tweeds with a Jaeger flannel shirt and negligent tie; contempt of frills written all over him; his hands clean and well-kept, but not manicured. His complexion, singularly fair even for a man with reddish hair, seemed too bloodless to me, reminded me of his vegetarianism—the last man in the world to understand the physical side of the prize-fighter, though a pugi-

list had been the hero of his first novel. His entrance into the room, his abrupt movements—as jerky as the ever-changing mind—his perfect unconstraint—all showed an able man, very conscious of his ability, very direct, very sincere, very imperious.

"To get to business," Shaw began, "I liked your letter, as I told you; the price, too, suits me for the moment; but—you won't alter my articles, will you?"

"Not a word," I said. "If I should want anything changed, which is most unlikely, I'd send you a proof and ask you to alter it; but that case is not going to occur often."

"But who else are you getting to write in this frank way?" he cried, "shan't we all be contradicting each other?"

"I don't love consistency," I replied, "I want half a dozen able men writing regularly so that I may hope for three articles a week with something original in each of them."

"Who are your six geniuses?" asked Shaw.

"Well, I've got H. G. Wells to do the novel-reviews. He's good enough, isn't he?"

"I daresay he is," was Shaw's non-committal reply. "He's an advanced thinker, too, you know, against the government, I mean. And who else?"

"D. S. McColl, the best art-critic in England," I said, "is coming to me. (He's now the head of the Tate Gallery) and Chalmers Mitchell, who will do the science (Mitchell is now the head of the Royal Zoological Society). I think you'll be in good company, for Cunningham Graham, Arthur Symonds, Pater, Wilde and a lot more have promised occasional papers."

"Rum crew for a Conservative ship; but that's your affair and not mine. You say I can be sure that the ghost will always walk, as theatrical people say."

"We'll pay regularly every month," I replied.

"Very well then," Shaw concluded, "if the money appears regularly you

can count on me for a weekly outpouring. You don't limit me in any way?"

"Not in any way," I answered.

"Well," he said. "It seems to me that *The Saturday Review* should make a stir."

"After we're all dead, not much before, but that doesn't matter," I replied. "I've asked all the reviewers only to review those books they admire and can praise; star-finders they should be, not fault-finders."

"What'll 'the master of flouts and jeers' think?" asked Shaw. (Lord Salisbury, the bitter-tongued Prime Minister, had been a constant contributor to the *Saturday Review* twenty years before, and was understood still to take an interest in his old journal.)

"I don't know and I don't care," I replied. And our talk came to an end.

I found Shaw an admirable contributor, always punctual unless there was some good reason to be late; always scrupulous, correcting his proofs heavily, with rare conscientiousness and always doing his very best.

Yet he was never physically strong: he told me one day that his work often exhausted him so that he was fain to go into a dark room and lie flat on his back on the bare floor, every muscle relaxed, for hours, just to rest. The confession surprised me: at that time I could hardly make myself feel tired in the longest day.

At rare intervals I had to tell Shaw his article was too long and beg him to shorten it. For months together I had nothing to do except congratulate myself on having got him as a contributor; though at first he was strenuously objected to by many of my readers who wrote begging me to cancel their subscriptions or at least to cease from befouling their houses with "Shaw's socialistic rant and theater twaddle."

Two or three incidents in the four years' companionship may be cited for they show, I think, the real Shaw. William Morris, the poet and decorator-craftsman, died suddenly. Shaw called just to tell me he'd like to write an

extra article on Morris, as a Socialist and prose-writer and speaker. I said I'd be delighted for Arthur Symonds was going to write on his poetry and Cunningham Graham on his funeral. I hoped to have three good articles. I had two excellent ones: Symonds was very good indeed and so was Shaw; but Cunningham Graham had written a little masterpiece, a gem of restrained yet passionate feeling: absolute realistic description lifted to poetry by profound emotion.

Shaw came blown in on the Monday full of unaffected admiration.

"What a story that was of Graham's!" he cried, "a great writer, isn't he?"

I nodded: "an amateur of genius: it's a pity he hasn't to earn his living by his pen."

"A good thing for us," cried Shaw, "he'd wipe the floor with us all if he often wrote like that."

I only quote the incident to show Shaw's unaffected sincerity and ingenuous admiration of good work in another man.

I came to regard him as a realist by nature, who living in the modern realistic current, was resolved to be taken simply for what he was and what he could do and equally resolved to judge all other men and women by the same relentless realistic standard. This love of truth for its own sake, truth beyond vanity or self-praise, is a product of the modern scientific spirit and appears to me to embody one of the loftiest ideals yet recorded.

Shaw was no knight-errant of unpopular causes or unpopular men. When Wilde had done three-quarters of his inhuman sentence, he was reported to be in bad health and I busied myself to get him released before his time. The head of the Prison Commission, Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, told me that if a dozen literary men of distinction would sign a petition for Wilde's release on the ground that the sentence of two years' hard labor had been condemned by a Royal Commission as too severe, he had no doubt that the

Home Secretary would advise the Queen to remit the rest of Wilde's sentence. I have told elsewhere how I tried to get Meredith to sign the petition and failed. After various other failures I asked Shaw: he thrust out his lips and wrinkled his brows in distaste, then said:

"O, I'm not important enough; get someone else."

I urged him a little disdainfully for I couldn't understand anyone refusing such a service when he burst out:

"I don't know that Wilde's worth incurring unpopularity for, if you must have my true reason! He tickles the furry ears of the public; but he's not a Morris or a Graham; I'll have enough unpopularity on my own account some day; I don't care to weaken myself for Wilde."

Yet Shaw spoke stoutly for the fel-laheen in Egypt in the Denshaw affair and he was a Pro-Boer during the South African mess and he has got into the hottest of hot water over this war, —brave enough for anything in the way of duty; but not chivalric for a cent.

Another story:

One day I got a letter from a friend begging me not to let Shaw go on "writing drivel about Shakespeare; on his own job he's good but why let him talk rot?" I had noticed Shaw's divagations; but he usually employed Shakespeare like the British employ the ten commandments as a shillelagh, and as Shaw took the great dramatist generally to point unconventional morals, I didn't wish to restrain him. But one day his weekly paper was chiefly about Shakespeare, and he fell into two or three of the gross common blunders on the subject: notably in one passage he assumed that Shakespeare had been a good husband—the usual English misconception.

I wrote him at once:

"You are writing so brilliantly on the weekly theater-happenings, why on earth drag in Shakespeare always like King Charles's head, as you know nothing about him." I got an answer by return:

"What in thunder do you mean by saying I know nothing of Shakespeare? I know more about the immortal Will than any living man," and so forth and so on.

I replied instantly:

"Come to lunch one day at the Café Royal and I'll give you the weeds and the cup of water your soul desires and prove into the bargain that you know nothing whatever about Shakespeare."

When we had ordered our lunch Shaw began:

"Who's going to be the judge between us, Frank Harris, on this Shakespeare matter?"

"You, Shaw, only you," I replied, "I am to convince you of your complete and incredible ignorance."

He snorted: "then you have your work cut out; we can't sleep here, can we?"

"The time it will take," I retorted, "depends on your intelligence—that's what I'm reckoning on."

"Humph!" he grunted. We had our meal and then went at it hammer and tongs.

"You believe," I began, "that because Shakespeare left Stratford after being married a couple of years and did not return for eleven years that he loved his wife?"

"No, no," replied Shaw, "I said in my article that in his will he left his wife 'the second-best bed' as a pledge of his affection. I remember reading once something that convinced me of this; I don't recall the argument now; but at the time it convinced me and I can look it up for you if you like."

"You needn't," I replied, "I'll give it you; it's probably the old Professorial explanation: the best bed in those days was in the guest room; therefore the second-best bed was the one Shakespeare slept in with his wife."

"That's it," cried Shaw, "that's it and it is convincing. How do you meet it?"

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" I replied. "Here's Shakespeare the most articulate creature that ever lived, the greatest lord of language in record-

ed time, unable in his will to express a passionate emotion so as to be understood. Why, had he even written "our bed, dear" as the common grocer would have done, we'd all have known what he meant. Shakespeare could never write 'the second-best bed' without realizing the sneer in the words and intending us to realize it as well. . . ."

"Good God," exclaimed Shaw, throwing up his hand to his forehead impatiently, "of course not; how stupid of me! Confound the Professors and their idiot explanations!"—and after a pause—"I'll give you the second-best bed"; I'm prepared to believe that Shakespeare did not love his wife. Go ahead with your other proofs of my ignorance."

At five that afternoon we left the table, Shaw declaring he would never write again about Shakespeare, if I'd write about him.

On that, I began my articles on Shakespeare which afterwards grew into books; but Shaw has not kept his vow. He has written again and again on the subject and always ignorantly being more minded to realize Shaw than Shakespeare. In his latest book indeed "Misalliance," he devotes thirty pages of preface to his playlet "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" in order to convict me of mistakes and at length he has learned a new trick. He takes thing after thing I've discovered; sets them forth in my very words and then declares: "Frank won't have this or that," thus hoisting Frank with his own bomb.

Towards the end of my tenure of *The Saturday Review*, Shaw was making a great deal of money by his plays, thanks mainly I believe to the way Arnold Daly had fought for him in the United States.

Casually he told me one day that every article he wrote for me cost him much more than he got for it.

"I mean," he said, "the same time spent on a comedy would pay me ten times as much."

Thus was Bernard Shaw discovered. And thus did he discover himself!

THE WARRIOR

By G. Vere Tyler

THE Warrior was fifty-four years old and weighed two hundred and twenty pounds. But neither time nor weight had succeeded in entirely robbing her of beauty. In her younger days she had no doubt been a resplendent Juno. She was now what I have styled her—a Warrior.

What she warred for was her husband; what she warred against was the woman who invariably rose up, no matter where they might find themselves, to make an attack on him.

From the standpoint of the importance of man, as forced upon women through the centuries, he was no doubt worth fighting for. Thirty-four years old; of robust build; a round head covered by kinky hair quite of the Greek order; a low brow, also Greek like; merry magnetic gray eyes; a sufficiently good nose, and an irresistibly smiling pair of masculine lips that shut in or opened up on very white, perfectly formed teeth. This was the fellow, slightly effeminate, perhaps, as to certain mannerisms, and a rather showy dresser, but with a genial, merry way about him that had its charm.

As to his conversational powers, he was well up on the current gossip of sport; he gave vent to kindly and sagacious opinions on murder cases and the disappearance of girls, and he was absolutely *au fait* as to the fashions of both men and women. The latest shoe, belt, or hat was a part of his education, and these things he discussed in such a manner that those whose attention he engaged, to put it in his own way, immediately "got busy." Pretty soon after his arrival anywhere, everybody began to prink up and become lively,

and in this way, at summer resorts especially, where I had run across the couple for several seasons, he soon became the idol of the assembled women.

I should not omit to add that he was a good dancer, but as it was only on rare occasions that some member of the opposite sex proved sufficiently unattractive not to insure an encounter with the Warrior in the case of his taking a partner, he usually pirouetted in a kind of *tout seule* tantalizing to feminine fancy. Finally as an expert in candy he was unequalled, occasionally arriving from the city with attractive looking boxes which he presented to the Warrior, who, with condescending graciousness, as if each morsel represented a part of himself that she was generously bestowing, passed them around. The Warrior took great pleasure as well as pride in seeing to it that he was both attractive and popular—from a distance. The more he became admired—from the correct angle—the more she became envied.

I have already explained that as to age the Warrior was somewhat advanced and that she was a very large woman. What I next wish to call attention to is the fact of very small feet, shod invariably in high-heeled, low-cut shoes of the most exaggerated variety. These shoes, from which vivid colorings were not tabooed, made it a difficult task for the small feet to carry about what was so generously and grandiloquently erected upon them. It was the evident discomfort of the shoes, combined with the rarest of silk stockings, that proclaimed the fact that the Warrior was by nature a coquette; that she had ever been at war as to man and

appreciated the importance of keeping her implements shining.

To fortify her position of power and protect herself from the bare semblance of neglect, in case of her husband failing in the least to offer the proper public demonstration, the Warrior, to whom this was quite simple, gathered about her youthful members of the opposite sex. It was one of her ways of proving to women that not only could she keep her own male, but that she could also take unto herself those of others, should she feel so inclined. While strict about the laws laid down for her mate, the Warrior, as to her own life, was as much a law unto herself as the queen bee is in the hive. To be perfectly fair, it was rather magnificent.

Her small feet, so perilously shod, caused the Warrior to sit a great deal, and it was from the depths of some large chair, which might fittingly be designated throne, occupied with erectness, out of deference to the long corsets that held the large form intact, that the Warrior charmed the youthful male and viewed the maneuvers of the females bent upon the capture of her husband. Always, even though apparently otherwise engaged, she watched them—always she watched him.

There may have been women innocent of any attempt to capture the Warrior's prisoner, but none such were given the benefit of the doubt. The Warrior suspected every woman; she never looked upon a woman except to suspect her. Every costume, every ribbon, every wrap, every jewel, especially every conspicuous pair of stockings or shoes—the Warrior laid great stress upon the feet of the women—was an implement of war for her to guard against, and, if need be, to fight.

As a matter of fact, women stood in fear of her, for it was well known that whenever it came to an actual encounter, she fought openly and furiously. Hers was not an over-refined or sensitive nature; and there were whispers of fist encounters in the past—of some handsome pair of jaws that

had been slapped, for instance. But such tales were mere rumors; at any rate, they had never been verified.

However, heroic her nature certainly was, and there was a challenge in the small blue eyes, so rich in passion for men, and so cold as steel to women, before which the feminine spirit quailed. The bleached hair, piled high and a bit streaked, always decorated with some unique jeweled comb or other headgear of the hour, might provoke a smile from those as yet untouched by time, but not so her eye, still clear, still deadly.

To me, from the moment my eyes rested upon her, she was a pathetic figure. She was the keeper of a well-trained animal, obedient as he performed tricks that redounded to her glory, but nevertheless seeking at least temporary escape. The pathos lay in the fact that it seemed to me that the Warrior, whom I regarded at times as a fierce animal tamer rather than a self-possessed general, was conscious of this. Whenever she would lift her skirt to dive into the depths of a large chamois bag, in which were stored her jewels and her cash, for a coin, perhaps for a beggar, perhaps to donate to the organ-grinder's monkey, I always expected to see a shiny black whip or a pistol come forth. In other words, what disturbed me was that in spite of the tremendous front she presented, her power over her husband was on the wane, and that while, of course, unconfessed, she knew it.

From the moment of my arrival at the somewhat showy summer hotel by the side of a bay, supposed to be cool and actually inordinately hot, her elephantine maneuvers fascinated me. There was something absolutely splendid, I thought, in her single-handed fight against the world for this male creature that custom and the slavery of women to men had caused her to go daily to warfare for—to never be at rest about—or know a peaceful hour. It was as though centered in her gigantic stature was all the feminine folly of the ages, and I could never rid myself of

the feeling that this folly would culminate in disaster. I began to watch the woman; keeping my eyes upon her with a keenness of relish almost equal to her own eager watching. I began, in fact, to look upon her as a kind of social Napoleon, and in each woman that bobbed up I fancied there might possibly be a Wellington.

Everything she said or did I regarded in the light of a skirmish. These were the outward signs by which I read the thoughts that came so plainly through those small eyes, so passionate to men and so steely cold to women. It seemed to me that a low-cut gown or a blazing diamond was sufficient cause for the Warrior to dream of deadly assault; also that she stood in terror of putting her power to actual test.

Sometimes at the sight of a woman's bared shoulders, or darkened lashes, or artistically rouged cheeks, the Warrior would suddenly burst into tears, which were instantly attributed to a condition of the nerves that had followed upon an operation she had once undergone, or to the sudden memory of a dead relative. I liked this quick recovery; the strategy that sought to instantly cover all signs of weakness and turn momentary defeat to victory. One great advantage pressed forward by her on such occasions was the expressed sympathy of her husband. This she gave herself up to with splendid femininity and her way of returning his kiss, the artfulness of her passion, strengthened her position. Women who had never learned to kiss like that fell away disarmed.

What troubled me was, how long, given these attacks of weakness, would the Warrior hold her ground? Was a fair Wellington on her way? A little incident caused me to feel that she was.

One night I happened to be seated, at a late hour, in the corner of the porch when the Warrior's husband came forth collarless, coat-collar upturned, bent upon an errand to the drug store in an attempt to offset for the Warrior the effect of an unusually good dinner that happened to have been

magically supplied by the innkeeper. The look of his eyes as they fell upon me and his rapid fire of eager, almost passionate conversation, caught on the fly, convinced me of the big fellow's fatigue—his desire for the new. I knew from that hour that he could not be trusted—that a fair Wellington *was* on the way, but I was not prepared for the suddenness with which she came.

II

ONE hot night, when the electric lights seemed torches from the infernal regions, and the most æsthetically inclined, assembled in the dining hall, were forced to cope with suffocation and perspiration, as though a moonbeam had strode into the room in woman's shape—Wellington appeared.

At the very moment of her appearance I knew it was Wellington, and when the headwaiter escorted her to the one vacant seat in the room, which was to the left of the Warrior and opposite her prey, my heart stood still.

Here was a woman of the distinctly man-enslaving kind, but withal so opposite in all things to the Warrior herself that the very contrast, apart from the extreme loveliness of the newcomer, could not fail to attract him instantly. One living in the hot flames of the sun turns yearningly to a cool bath in the moon.

I was so sure of the immediate effect to be produced that I was rather in dread of the recollection of the hospital operation, or the memory of the dead relative bringing forth an outburst. But beside a military straightening of the Warrior's form, upon which diamonds flashed unusually this evening, and a moment later a sidelong glance at the man on her right, the new arrival might as well, to all appearances, not have been there.

There was nothing of the coquette about the stranger, but something far more deadly than coquetry and far more dangerous. Her charm lay in the fact that she was men's dream of woman materialized, but so ethereally

and with, if I may so speak, such fragrant spirituality, that while they yearned they respected or rather reverentially desired, so that she would be pursued with the fervor of one awakened to the religious call. I could not resist watching her intently as she unfolded her napkin and attempted a neighborly smile at the Warrior, who failed to return it. Later, when her soup arrived, her gentle eyes roamed about until they rested on the salt-cellar that happened to be out of her reach and very nearly beside the plate of the man, who returned her smile as he passed it over to her.

These things, so simple in themselves, were to be fraught with poignant dangers. I was finally surprised out of my hypnotic observation by a remark of my next door neighbor.

"She is very beautiful," I heard him say, "isn't she?"

"Dangerously so," I replied, a shade of terror in my voice.

"Why dangerously so?" he inquired, smiling at my earnestness.

I did not see fit to express my own ideas as to what might occur through the infringement of such beauty upon the Warrior, so I merely repeated aloud my thought of the moment before, that she was the kind of woman to appeal to the subconscious demands of a man to the point of causing him to lose his head on account of her.

My companion could not agree with me, after which we both became absorbed in some spicy dessert, a specialty of the house, and our black coffee.

To my surprise a little later, when we were swarming the porch and scrambling for the best chairs, I saw the Warrior making polite advances to the stranger, which the latter took graciously enough, but with a certain reserve, as if her sympathetic impulses had been checked. She finally, in fact, as soon as she politely could, moved off to a corner of the porch, where she stood, a silent, angelic figure in white, looking out on the bay.

In spite of it being quite late, long after dark, a faint red still persisted in

the west, which seemed to add lustre to the few stars that came out like sentinels to watch the approach of the entire host.

Selfishness as to chairs found me comfortably seated beside the Warrior, who, without ado and with a complete abandonment of the manner she had assumed to the stranger, remarked curtly, as she turned her eyes from the woman: "She is a snake!"

I made mild protests, which seemed to excite the Warrior, who without further ado broke out into violent abuse of women in general.

"She left that white thing," she said in conclusion, "over her chair at table on purpose. She supposed it would be fetched to her."

"Was it?" I asked eagerly.

"It was," she returned, and her eyes and lips and dilated nostrils spoke the rest.

I glanced at the woman still standing. She was gazing on the bay with the star-lit sky above, as though she would like to drown herself in it out of pure joy of what it offered. She appeared to me ingenuous, and her sole offence, I felt quite sure of this, lay in her perfect loveliness, which at the moment, at any rate, seemed to me matchless.

After a while the Warrior's man appeared and took his stand in the open doorway. I saw him look somewhat anxiously about until his eyes rested upon the newcomer. Through some unaccountable impulse, just as if he had called her, she turned and faced him. Involuntarily he started towards her, but at the end of a few paces he paused, looked anxious, lit a cigarette, came over, took his seat by the Warrior, lifted her hand and began toying with her rings. The act did not appease her. She took her hand from him, ordered him to go for a light wrap, and a few moments later she had marched him off.

III

I KNOW of certain rivers that flow along peacefully, sometimes for years

at a time, just moistening the low grounds and making nature productive and harmonious. And then one day when the rains have fallen with too persistent violence they swell up and overflow and destroy regardless of consequences.

It was so with the Warrior's husband. From the moment the beautiful woman appeared as out of a blue sky, the pent-up torrents of the man's being overflowed and he lost his placid bearings just as completely as ever a river did when it became a freshet. A few days of repression and restraint on the part of both, and then, theoretically, these two were in one another's arms before the entire house.

The self-control of the Warrior in this hour was something bordering, I thought, on the sublime. No tears now from recollections of painful hospital days or memories of dead relatives. Just an overpowering, impressive calm, as though the gigantic creature had turned to stone, while over her features hung a carved veil. I and others peered through the veil, but no one was vouchsafed the meaning of the cold mystery that had settled in the small blue eyes.

One evening a dance was planned and it was during the hours preceding the dance that I discovered that the Warrior had not given up the fight. Her door happening to be slightly ajar, in the late afternoon, I caught sight of her seated in a high chair, a Turkish towel covering her enormous shoulders, while a dapper French hairdresser stood at her back manipulating false puffs and braids. It seemed to me, when she appeared in the evening in a shiny black satin gown, flashing in diamonds and rubies, that the Frenchman had been amusing himself at her expense. But that may have been merely my fancy. Barring the unbecomingness of the elaborate coiffure there was no denying the superlative grandeur of the Warrior on this occasion. Not only was she magnificent as to attire, but far more so in her superb calm and queenliness. And I can truthfully vouch for it that not even the

fall of Napoleon before Wellington was as unexpected as that of the Warrior before the woman who entered somewhat late in the evening in a white dress covered by some kind of a silver tunic and with a single white rose fastened in her light brown hair. It was—I happened to be standing near—an inward collapse that left the Warrior for one moment dead—deader than stone, but the very next moment liver than fire. The head lifted, the eyes shot forth flames, and the great breast heaved.

The Warrior was on the eve of battle and with that magnetic force that is part of a great general she drew people to her and wielded her power. No one had ever seen the Warrior at quite such a pitch of self-revelation, and astonishment added to her success. She flattered; she charmed; her laugh rang out.

Like a man dazed, her husband stood by her side, silently, stupidly; an animal guilty of theft for which, in spite of her apparent oblivion of him, he was to receive punishment. Finally the moment arrived, however, for him to be exhibited as a possession. By a quick turn he was literally flung into the faces of all beholders, as though the besieged citadel had been lit up on a dare. She called attention to his charms, she patted his arms and rubbed his curls, smiling and calling for applause. Finally, someone proposed ironically that we all drink to his health, and at this auspicious moment she commanded him to bend down, take from one tiny foot its scarlet slipper, fill it with wine and drink from it. The applause as he did so was deafening, disorderly, and bewildering.

The woman in the white dress, who had appeared pale and terrified by all this horse-play, finally escaped. Following her a few moments later, myself sickened by a scene of extravagant bravado, I saw her standing in the corner of the porch that I had begun to call her corner, her eyes fixed upon the bay, now beautifully lit up by a full moon.

Something in her gentleness against the fierceness of the Warrior sent through me a kind of thrill of apprehension, and in spite of our slight acquaintance, it impelled me to warn her. I went silently, I might say cautiously, up to her. When she found me by her side she started and turned quickly to face me. For one moment my intention was lost in a rapt wonder of her loveliness as she stood bathed in the reflection of the moonlight.

"What is it?" she asked, answering my fixed stare.

"You should go away from here!" I answered almost in a whisper.

She paused in a sort of breathless contemplation before she answered: "I know it," she said, and added as she laid her hand in a kind of terror upon me, "but I can't!"

And then the man, the Warrior's prey, appeared in the light of the doorway looking around.

As soon as he espied us he came forward rapidly, his face deadly white, his eyes aglow like those of a man who has lost a treasure and suddenly finds it.

It was as if he did not see me at all, as if I were nothing more than one of the empty chairs standing about; so I moved away as silently and swiftly as I had come. At the door I paused and looked back. He had the woman in his arms, her head was bent back and his mouth was upon hers.

Something in the sight of these two, utterly lost to all caution and reason, dragged me back to the dining-room. The scene was a bacchanalian one; the guests were, for the better part, on their feet. The Warrior was also standing. She had her fat arm uplifted, and in her hand was a wine-glass full to overflowing. The red slipper was beside her plate; her body, on this account, tilted over; the French coiffure had lost a comb and was a bit awry. The Warrior was intoxicated. . . .

The next morning the guests were informed that during the night the stranger who had worn the white dress and the silver tunic the night before had been murdered in her room. It

was true. The Warrior had fought to a finish.

IV

THE next time I saw the Warrior was in the prisoner's dock. She was being tried for her life.

Great changes had taken place in her, and while she still made an effort at maintaining a grand composure, there was the look about her of all being over.

She had lost flesh; her eyes, due to the expired light of them, appeared to have faded; her complexion had the grayish hue of an elephant's hide; and she wore her hair differently, with no attempt at utilizing it as ornamentation. She was dressed in black, a plain black cloth dress, and wore a black hat with some kind of bird's wing on it. It was the wing that caught my attention as something superfluous, silly even. It had almost a rakish turn, as though its purpose was to call attention to what, in spite of all the changes manifest, this woman really was—or had been.

What struck a chord of sensational pathos in me was that she no longer wore even high-heeled shoes. I was quick to observe this and it affected me almost as sharply as though she had lost an eye. A part of her, I had felt distinctly, was gone when she walked sensibly forward in a pair of broad, black, low-heeled shoes. As she took her stand in the dock my mind flew to the white patent leather slippers of the black heels, and the red one that her husband had drunk from. A kind of shudder passed over me at these recollections—which strangely enough landed me at the bedside of the murdered woman, divine in death, as I had seen her, with a wreath of flowers upon her. This, however, was but momentary, and with my eyes upon the Warrior, seated erect in her chair with that look of all being over, I found myself repeating copybook phrases such as: "How art the mighty fallen!"

A weakling overthrown is a sight that takes small hold; it is when the

mightily fall that the heart stands still. A man is wrecked by his weakness or his strength; it is those of the latter class who compel the attention of the world. This murderess had compelled the attention of her world. Her pictured face was known to the public through the press, and she had forced the New York papers to headlines about her for months. To see her sitting there in that black dress, with sightless appearing eyes, trapped, chained up, as it were, made a slight nausea creep over me, and I turned my gaze about the crowded place, hot to suffocation, like the dining hall was the night of the entrance of the gentle woman now dead.

And then my eyes fell and lingered on the man who had been the cause of all this; this being who had created in the mind of a woman, destined by nature, perhaps, for greatness, a false standard of male importance that had kept her at war for him for eighteen years, and in the end had made a murderess of her.

I saw the women's eyes traveling to this mere man as though he were some idol of the ages and well worth the female sacrifice now burning upon the altar before them. I saw the caress in their slavish glances; I saw them stabbed by old ideas as they drank in the details of his outward decoration, down to the diamond scarf pin that the Warrior had presented to him on a birthday fifteen years before, and that he had never omitted wearing one day since. Once, just for a moment, I saw the Warrior take note of this; saw the old look of jealous hatred as it stabbed her eyes from the back; saw the veil now like some metal substance dim her features.

As the great breast heaved I stood in fear that she would burst her chains and rush upon this enemy that she had so long defiantly held at bay, but it was suddenly over in a kind of wearied relaxation as her eyes became fixed ahead of her in a dull, half resentful, half helpless stare, such as one fancies lay in the eyes of Napoleon at St. Helena. It suddenly all became silly to me; the

scene about me, and the mixing of these two; the great Napoleon and this murderess.

It had been widely advertised that she was to testify to-day in her own defence and so the crowd was greeted by a great surprise when the moment for her to do so arrived. Quite out of order her husband was on his feet ahead of her with the request to the judge that he be allowed to take the stand in her behalf.

After some demurring by the lawyers and the final obtaining of her consent, this was agreed to. With a somewhat sorrow-ridden, pale face, but with a steady voice he gave his testimony.

What he said was that his wife killed in self-defense. The pistol with which the deed was done, and that bore his initials, was his—there was no doubt about that. It was not she, however, who had taken the pistol to the girl's room. He himself had given the pistol to the girl for safe-keeping, on account of an altercation on the day of the shooting between himself and his wife, in which the latter had threatened to take her own life. When his wife had surprised them it was the girl who had grasped the pistol that lay on her bureau to protect herself. The superior strength of his wife had easily enabled her after a quick leap upon the girl to wrest it from her hand, and in the struggle it had gone off and killed the girl.

As the man went through with this superb lie, the crowd drank it in in breathless silence. The question that arose in my own mind was whether or not the Warrior had once more exerted her old power over him, and so, through him, actually cleared herself. Her appearance for the moment may have suggested the idea. She stood, for the first time in how many years, I wondered, well balanced upon the broad soles of her shoes, poised, insolent, and commanding, as some master who has enforced a difficult obedience from his slave and is triumphing. But when she had again taken her seat, while the jury filed out for its

verdict, the look of abandonment returned, the attitude of all being over, and crumpled up, with the heavy cheek rested upon one hand, she reminded me of some old castle falling to ruins.

The deliberation of the jury was brief. In less than twenty minutes the twelve men were back with their verdict of not guilty, which was followed by an uproar of mingled applause and hisses.

The Warrior's prey led her from the room.

V

It was some six months later that I happened to be walking on Broadway at that magic hour when the electric lights are beginning to stab the daylight in their effort to take full and blinding possession of both street and people.

The month was March and the day had been wonderful; half winter, half spring; one moment the wind had in it a soothing caress, the next the people all seemed to me revived, content with the present as they fastened lids on the past. And so it was something of a shock to me to come face to face with the Warrior's prey.

Barring the dimmed eye, as of a lost hope settled there, he looked well, and was, as usual, well dressed. There was an air of freedom about him, enhanced by the stride and swing of him.

I had always intended, if I ever happened to run across him, to ask him, and try to induce him to tell me, why he had lied so gloriously for a tyrant who had held him in subjection for nearly twenty years, and of whom, by simply keeping silent, he could have freed himself.

After our greeting I did put the question straight out to him. He looked at me a bit queerly for a moment, a somewhat furtive glance that ended, it seemed, by his decision to trust me.

We happened to be standing near the entrance of one of Broadway's showy restaurants and he motioned to it.

"Suppose we go in here," he said, "and I will tell you."

The hour was between cabaret shows, and the place was a bit empty, dismal and quiet, but the sudden turning on of the electric lights soon restored the magic of an artificial garden of Eden, and when some simple order was given, with my elbows on the table, I gave myself up to hearing the story he was to unfold. On the whole it surprised me, and yet, given the fact that this man was merely a well-formed, well-groomed animal with years of training as such, what he said was quite natural.

"Of course," I said, by way of leading him on, "all you said on the stand was fictitious—a—" I hesitated, "lie."

"Certainly," he answered without a shadow of embarrassment, "of course it was."

"You wanted to save your wife from the chair or life imprisonment?"

My question rather staggered him. He looked at me a moment as though it was something he had never, even if he had asked it, answered himself.

"I don't know what I wanted to do," he replied finally. "All I know is that I just did what I did! I had had no intention of any such thing. I had gone there that day with the full intention of seeing her wrap the noose about her own neck and so make up for all the tyranny she had exerted over me from my kid days, and also avenge the woman she killed. When she was about to be called to the stand all this vanished; the other thing came up and I got up and said it."

"A man is a natural protector," I said, bending forward slightly.

He smiled. "Oh! that wasn't it! Eighteen years of being protected had killed all that. It may have been a move in my own behalf of my subconscious self."

"How?"

He stared at me, a kind of half cruel light coming into the gray eyes that I suddenly again noted great changes in: they were older—sadder, with a fixed expression that rather depressed.

"Can't you see," he said, "that I have got her right where she had me?"

Only," he added quickly, "she had me in the light—in the glare and glitter of the world—I have got her in the dark—away from the world!"

"Where?"

"In Jersey—a very desolate place. In an old house at the edge of the woods."

"Do you live there, too?"

"I go there when I like—yes, I suppose you would say I live there, too."

"And when you don't care to go there?"

"She stays alone."

"Just shut up there?"

"Yes, just shut up there."

"And she puts up with that?"

"What else can she do? Isn't she a murderess whom I—"

I waved my hand. "How does she stand it?"

I was surprised by a look somewhat strongly resembling pride that flashed across his face as he leaned over the table and brought his fist down upon it.

"Like the grand old war horse that she is," he said, and then suddenly falling into the well-remembered light manner he added, cheerily, "I take off my hat to her!"

"For her pluck?" I said excitedly.

"Yes, that's it—for her pluck—the way she takes her medicine!"

"All the same," I breathed fiercely, "she's a murderess—she—"

"Yes, but even a murderess's nerve commands respect! That's the thing," he paused as though about to recount some famous deed of heroism, "it's the way she takes her medicine! That's what gets me! She knows what my life is—what I am doing. Sometimes I can read in her eyes that she thinks I may have saved her to get even. Maybe I did—I don't know. What I do know is she's got the courage of an old lioness. Last week I stayed away three days and nights—never a word! You

ought to see her," he suddenly flashed, "why, the old Napoleon St. Helena stunt never touched hers—it's something great! It's killing her, though—she's going down under it—I can see it—day by day—it won't be long—it's splendid, though!" To my surprise his eyes filled with a gush of tears. "The poor old girl!" he exclaimed.

The place was beginning to fill with early diners; all the lights had been turned on and a girl and a man were doing some kind of a silly Spanish dance that ended after every round of applause with his turning her upside down and then throwing her across his knee with her neck in a good position for an executioner. And as I sat there, pierced by a sudden silence that had fallen between us, all the realities of life faded and I seemed to see the world as a mammoth circus in which everything that took place savored of both tragedy and comedy, and in which one might feel that nothing, in fact, did take place save in the imagination.

I was called out of this by the man inquiring if he might order dinner for us.

I rose up quickly at this. "No, no," I said, putting out my hand, "I must go!"

Was the Warrior dominating *me* now? At any rate, after some hesitation, I added, "If you care to say you met me, say also—" I hesitated again, "that I sent my regards!"

He seemed gratified at this and would have escorted me out, but I waved him back and strode rapidly to the door. As I stepped outside it seemed to me that I walked straight into that old house by the edge of those lonely woods out in Jersey and looked into the face of an old woman tottering under her own strength.



AH, that the danger from germs were the only danger in kissing!

THEIR FRIENDS

By Archie Austin Coates

HE and She became engaged. It was not announced in the regular way, they merely whispered it to their friends.

His friends said: "Good work, old boy! Mighty lucky. She's a fine girl, if you can hold her. You know she's ambitious, and *very* attractive. They say she doesn't care much for a home or a family. But you can train her, even if she is *so* extravagant. She'll change her tastes, maybe."

Her friends said: "What a lucky girl! But keep a watch on him, my

dear. They say he is very fickle; he's had *so* many affairs. And you can probably make him loosen up. He's a bit stingy, except in buying drinks. You have an interesting job ahead—but, of course, you know all about his temper. They say that when he was in Paris—"

So the Two were much impressed. They talked it over. They decided it was a *great mistake*. The engagement was broken.

Their friends said: "What a pity! Such a charming couple, and they would have been so happy!"



THOSE BURGLARS

By John Roberts

I WISH burglars would stay away
When I want to write late at night.
Their squeaky shoes get on my nerves,
I cannot concentrate.
If they only wouldn't
Incessantly rattle the silver
In dropping it into their black bags
And slam and poke around so,
Leaving draughty doors open.
Why the devil don't they stay
In their own homes
Nights
And go to sleep
And not bungle about,
Bothering me?



EILEEN

By Robert Carlton Brown

HER eyes and feet danced, with charm and grace. Her name was Eileen. She made her own morals, dresses and hats as she needed them. She was sonsy, debonair, giving to life what she wanted and getting it back. Her philosophy was, "We're here because we're here, because we're here."

At sixteen she took up life with the man she loved without exacting a marriage certificate or allowance in return. The man didn't know how lucky he was, because she kept him so busy straining up to her full conception of life. Because her days threatened to be dull she found employment in a department store, calling on prospective buyers of pianolas and phonographs; exchanging the money she made for fine fabrics to wear and joyous little luxuries of life. At night she danced, luring love and returning it.

On being psycho-analyzed by an amateur she gave as her immediate subconscious reaction to the word Life, a snatch of song, "This is the Life!" Everybody present laughed, for that was Eileen. Everybody at the party laughed appreciatively, for their answers had been dull enough, and the newest man who was trying to attract Eileen to him said she reminded him of a bottle of champagne with an exploded cork and he defined any human hand to press back the sparkle. Eileen was radiant at this, effervescing more than ever, and drinking whisky to lift her even beyond herself.

The next morning she had a coughing spell and a slight hemorrhage. Somebody sent for a doctor and the doctor said she had consumption. Her

lover was worried, but not Eileen.

"Anyway, I'm alive to-day," she spluttered with the last of the coughing fit and that night even the people who were accustomed to her dancing exclaimed over the magic of it.

Eileen danced, loved, lived, all regardless.

"I will bud, blossom, seed, and bud again," she sang, and looking into her joyous eyes one believed.

After the hemorrhage doctors hovered around Eileen like Mother Carey's chickens circling about a dying fish, gasping for life at the surface. But Eileen ducked beneath the water as mysteriously as a hell-diver, eluding them.

For years everybody was considerate of her health: everybody but Eileen.

As she grew older her complexion became more glowing; people said it was a manifestation of the disease. The world followed Eileen around from morning till night, suggesting cold compresses, Arizona, cod-liver oil, and applying a cold key to the back of the neck. She thanked the world and told it to go to the devil.

"Eileen'll be sorry some day," chided her friends.

Having outlived one generation, Eileen took up with their sons and daughters, passing current among them because of her complexion, adolescence and youth. It wasn't long before the second generation began to shake its head and say, "Poor Eileen, she's going the pace. Chuck full of T. B. too. She'll never last. Might die any day."

Eileen admitted the truth of it, but refused to wear rubbers.

The thing was beginning to bother

people. She was altogether too gay and alive for her age. Mothers she had gone to school with scolded their thirty-year-old bachelor sons for taking Eileen out to dinner and enjoying it. It wasn't the dinner that was begrudged so much as the fact that the sons enjoyed Eileen.

But as time wore on the ravages of consumption became more marked in Eileen. At sixty her eyes were just a little too bright and her cheeks bore the tell-tale hectic flush of the dread disease when young men proposed to her. At seventy the white plague demonstrated its power by undermining her teeth and she lost two back ones.

"If Eileen would only take care of her health, she might have a chance to live," the grandchildren of Eileen's first lovers said sagely.

Eileen didn't. She still sang and danced and loved.

But it couldn't last. Four generations of doctors had said so.

And it didn't.

When Eileen was ninety-seven she died. Of consumption, too. All her friends gathered in commiseration. There was a great shaking of heads and everybody seemed to get a lot of fun out of repeating, "I told you so." The doctors had been right all along, after all. It had been most unwise for Eileen to fly in the face of the pharmacopoeia.

"Well, little old Eileen went the pace; what else could she expect!" was the verdict of the assembled group, waiting in hushed silence in the next room for the undertaker to come and fix up the corpse for a private view. In their virtuous righteousness they almost went so far as to say, "It serves her right."

The undertaker came with a businesslike little assistant, who looked like a slim coffin on legs.

"Which room?" asked the callow assistant professionally, while his boss was consulting with Eileen's sorrowing descendants how many carriages at how much per would be needed.

"In there," they nodded.

The young man disappeared with his little black bag, thoughtfully closing the door after him.

An instant later, in disarray, eyes bulging from his head, satchel gone, hands clutching at air like a madman, the assistant burst through the door, frothing at the mouth, his face as white as a winding sheet.

"What's the matter? For God's sake, speak," cried the assembled friends of Eileen.

The young man cast one terrified glance back at the door and toppled to the floor on his wobbly knees. His boss rushed up and shook him. "What happened? What happened?" he cried.

Amidst the general hubbub the young man articulated with stuttering difficulty, "I—I think the corpse—win—winked her eyes at me. She was very beautiful." The young man fled the house.

"Just like her. Eileen to the last. She died hard. It's a wonder she couldn't even die decently," the assembled group sobbed sorrowfully while the boss undertaker inspected the corpse and came back to report that his soft assistant must have been overcome by the attractive face of Eileen.

Everybody sighed in relief. The returns were all in. Eileen had really passed away. Of course in a final effort at resurrection she might have winked at the youth, but everybody scouted the possibility of it; her constitution had never been strong and it seemed unlikely that a body so far gone with tuberculosis could retain strength to flicker an eyelash at the finish.



THE UNNATURAL THING

By J. A. Meyer

LAST night I made a curious discovery. With my hair drawn back in a certain way, I can seem to look absolutely ugly!

I owe this revelation to Ellis, the newly installed successor to Marley, and anyone else would have discharged Ellis on the spot. But I can not only afford to experience the shock; I can be amused by it. I can even amuse others with it. It makes an excellent story. Charles will not believe me and begs me to let him see for himself.

"Yes, some day, Charles," I answer, "I shall wear it like that to one of the Randolph dinners, so the whole world will know the truth about your wife and pity you for marrying her with your eyes closed."

Then he believes me even less.

So I merely smile as I say to Ellis:

"What are you trying to make of me, Ellis? A suffragette?"

II

I HAVE been depressed all day. I fear a six weeks' rest cure is staring me in the face again.

Ellis annoys me. She is an excellent maid, but I have the sensation of being watched over in her presence—watched over is the expression, not watched. Her care of me has something in it of patronage. It is not the guard of a faithful dog. It is far more that of an elder sister or a watchful saint. I don't like it. It is unflattering and uncomfortable.

Then my green velvet came home this morning and was a great disappointment. It is nothing like the model, or what is worse, it is just

enough like it to have "copy" written all over it. Yet Madame Gauthier herself swore she could carry it out successfully. Why must women lose all sense of honor when they enter business?

The crowning banality was Charles and his ruby ring! He knows by now, surely, how I hate colored stones. Beyond all excuse, too ghastly to think of, was his maudlin self-pity; "I thought you'd appreciate the thought." Why not think a step further then? Why not remember that I have some taste, some preference, some discrimination? *He* likes rubies! Of course, if he is adorning me for his own selfish pleasure, he is making me a jewel rack, and nothing more. So I told him and he stormed out of the room. That was when I caught Ellis regarding me in such an odd fashion. I felt compelled, to preserve the situation, to address her with a dash of flippancy.

"Am I not right, Ellis?" I smiled, to assure her it was all comedy.

"Quite right, Madame," she answered and I felt the impertinence but could not point it out to her. Clearly I had questioned her. I could not say, "I expect you to mumble unintelligibly as Marley would have done." One cannot become ridiculous.

Bruce Newton saved the day for me. He was my dinner partner at the Peytons'. He well deserves his notoriety, I fear. There is something charmingly wicked in the very look of his eyes. He had heard of me, he said, through Freddy Partington, and ever since had languished for a meeting.

"And now you have met me?" I asked.

"I shall challenge him to-morrow for having attempted a description."

He may stand between me and those baleful six weeks at the sanatorium.

III

I COULD suspect Charles of scheming to drive me mad. It is nothing less bourgeois than jealousy that stirs him now. He had heard of Bruce as "dangerous, unscrupulous, another Don Joo-on." Then, coming home early, he found Bruce calling. He was coldly polite, obviously the hackneyed injured husband, and followed it up, when Bruce had gone, with details—an enlivening story spoiled by coarse rendering, as I told him. Schnitzler, perhaps, could do Bruce justice. And one *must* have sympathy. He was infuriated when I spoke like this. He *ordered*—"I order you" were his words—that I should not see Bruce here again. Then he flung himself in a chair and wailed like a bad-tempered child.

"You only married me for my money!" he accused.

"What else was there to marry you for?" I asked, innocently.

I left him before he actually wept. A little later he came to my dressing-room, and, disregarding the presence of Ellis, took the occasion to revert to type. . . .

"Remember," said the locomotive engineer, "I give you every cent you possess and I made my pile by not being a fool!"

"Ellis," I cried sharply, trying to force her into his consciousness, "you are pinching my foot!"

He banged the door behind him!

IV

A RATHER interesting little scene has just occurred.

Bruce sent me some rare oriental perfume he had spoken about—Parfum Odalisque—and when he called for tea this afternoon, he asked why I was not using it. I had told Ellis to put it in the atomizer and I remembered later, when she was spraying my gown, to

ask if she had done so. She had said "yes" very distinctly.

"Ah," I laughed to Bruce, "do you so readily forget everything that charms you?"

We had a playful argument that turned into a bet. Then I sent for Ellis to prove I had won.

"Prepare to see a patron saint in cap and apron," I told him.

But she did not bear me out. She stood in the doorway with her eyes fixed on me steadily, her face deathly pale. She was singularly discomposed for one so adroit and capable. I was interested.

"Ellis," I said, "tell me, what perfume did you put in the atomizer this morning?"

"The new perfume, Madame," she answered, without taking her eyes from my face.

I glanced at Bruce triumphantly but he had risen and was standing near the window looking out, with his face partly hidden from me.

"Bruce!" I called.

He turned without seeming to see Ellis. Now, she is rather handsome in a plain, classic way, and her figure is good. . . .

"Yes," he said, regarding me steadily. "But perhaps your maid is trying to excuse her own negligence." His face was very strange—rather mottled and his lips looked blue.

"Ellis," I turned to her, "tell Mr. Newton which scent was in the atomizer."

She hesitated then faced him with a curiously defiant air. It occurred to me that servants get extraordinarily worked up over trifles. She lied to him with the expression of having her whole reputation at stake. All the while she must have known I could forgive her error but could not overlook the lie.

"It was the Parfum Odalisque which Mr. Newton sent Madame."

He shrugged his shoulders and turned away, having let his eye rest on her for scarcely more than a second.

After she had left the room I noticed him dab his forehead with his

handkerchief, as though he were very warm.

"It is dangerous," he said, "to have a maid who lies."

"How wicked of you to put it off on her!" I laughed.

I pitied his effort to smile.

"I am serious," he said, giving up the attempt at lightness. "Lying is the first step, then comes thieving or—worse, blackmail. Where did you get this girl?"

"Where does one get one's maids? Mrs. Heyworth, my housekeeper, got her for me," I replied.

"Is she to be depended upon to be strict about references?" His voice was strained, controlled.

I am not blind nor dull. I saw he knew something against the girl and for his own sake could not speak definitely. It was amusing to see his discomfort, and somehow it aroused a tenderness. . . .

"I begged her not to," I smiled. "Ellis satisfied me so well. She is so handsome: one should take that warning and be satisfied to look no deeper. I am susceptible to beauty where—well—respectability—leaves me cold. Do you not find her handsome?"

He was pulling his moustache fiercely. Now he gave me a thrillingly hunted look and, dropping his hand from his mouth, shrugged his shoulders.

"Hard," he criticised, "hard and cunning. I detest the type—in women above all. Poor things! Perhaps it comes with the day's work. They were made to be taken care of, even the meanest of them. It shatters them morally when they are forced out into the world to do the unnatural thing."

"Ah, if more men were so chivalrous, fewer women would have to."

"Men are but half-witted, till they meet the woman." He crossed the room to where I sat on the couch. "I have only just found that out," he said, leaning close to me. He has remarkable eyes.

"Now," I said lightly, shutting off his face with my opened fan, "you are acting up to all I have heard about you."

"No," he sat beside me and gently took my wrist and turned the fan away. I admit to fluttering like a girl—I was so frightened. "This is not acting. I meant never to tell you. I loved you as well as all that. But it is stronger than I."

I tried to rise. Suppose Charles had come in!

"Let me go!" I gasped.

He kissed me once before he let me go. . . . I do not think I grudge him that. . . .

One of the first things I did when I got to my own room was to send Ellis on an errand and ring for Mrs. Heyworth.

Mrs. Heyworth is a deeply religious woman. She would not lie, though it took her some time to make up her mind to tell the truth. She admitted that Ellis's references were "unusual." She added hastily that they were the best procurable. It came to light at last that Ellis had been recommended by a clergyman in whose house she was acting as chambermaid until she could find a position in her own line. He had taken her from a hospital where she had been lying penniless and critically ill for some time. It all sounded very dull and good. Mrs. Heyworth showed an inclination to dilate on the efficiency of the social work done by her church, so I had to dismiss her from the room. After all, it was a great deal of trouble to give oneself for a few drops of perfume.

To-night Charles brought me a peace-offering, diamonds, to show he has learned his lesson. I wore them for him and behaved very sweetly. At times I only feel sorry for him, for after all, he did not create himself in the beginning and he has done everything in his power to change.

One should not compare him with Bruce Newton, for example. It is painful. Bruce is so distinctly *de nous autres*—with all his untamed nature. Poor Bruce!

Ellis is so capable. My humor has changed. I have decided to say nothing to her.

V

I COULD laugh aloud at that last paragraph as I read it now. One is not permitted to be kind in this cruelly planned world. Surely I suspected the worst about Ellis but forbore to name it even to myself, allowing her ability to make up for all her past weakness—giving her a chance. I would have ceased investigations forever where Mrs. Heyworth had left them and I would have forgotten completely that I had ever been led to look Ellis up. One should always maintain this attitude toward one's servants. We have no rights in their world and if we would have them keep their place we must hold aloof from all their private matters, even their moral weaknesses, so long as these do not injure our dignity or our property in any way.

I little dreamed how these broad views were to be assailed. After all, it would seem, one must play the martinet. Everything else is impossible except in literature.

Ellis brought me my tea in bed this morning and prepared my bath for me as though nothing had happened. I was charming with her—unusually so, and was pleased when she answered merely in respectful monosyllables. Truly it is more annoying, now that I look back on it. I was beginning to see that it would be possible to make as good a maid out of Ellis as Marley had been.

I was in excellent humor, then, when I started out to look for furs for my taupe suit, and I was not prepared for anything worse than a petition for a holiday or something of the sort when Mrs. Heyworth accosted me in the hall.

"It is rather private, if Madame will see me in the library," she said with a serious face.

In the library she began at once.

"Madame is not satisfied with Ellis. Shall I not discharge her?"

"Ellis?" I smiled. "Oh, my little annoyance of yesterday has quite passed. Ellis will do very well. She behaved excellently this morning."

I was part way to the door when Mrs. Heyworth stopped me.

"If you could spare me but a moment more, Madame," she began hastily and when I stopped with my eyebrows raised, she coughed and became confused. "Madame has but to order, of course. But—the references. I looked into them more closely since Madame made her inquiries and—I am so sorry—it was very negligent of me, not having done so before, but—in short, I fear Ellis is not at all the person for Madame."

I looked Mrs. Heyworth over very coldly.

"It was delightful of you, Mrs. Heyworth," I said, "to spend the night at your investigations."

"The night, Madame?"

"What other time had you between last evening and this morning?"

"It is nearly twelve o'clock, Madame."

I stared at her. As I have said, she was a very strict church member and a very bad liar. She wilted.

"On the whole," I said, again taking a step toward the door, "I shall retain Ellis."

Her blank horror confirmed my purpose. Through some source she evidently had learned that Ellis had not always been exemplary. Here was a chance to discipline her strait-laced Puritanism.

"Madame!"

Her interruptions irritated me. I flashed her an angry look.

"Now what?"

She swallowed the words she was afraid to speak. The truth came out finally in a whisper.

"Ellis has dismissed herself this morning, Madame."

I stood still, trying to think it out. It looked interesting. Some unexpected and inexplicable curiosity led me to desire an interview with Ellis herself. I threw my muff upon the table and loosened my boa.

"Send Ellis in here," I said.

Ellis was still in uniform when she came in and her calm manner was very

marked beside Mrs. Heyworth's agitation. I could not choose which of them I objected to most. Both exasperated me to the point of extinction.

"So you are going, Ellis?" I inquired.

"Yes, Madame."

"I prefer you to remain."

She did not answer.

"You are an excellent maid and fulfill all my requirements," I continued with just the properly diluted kindness, "I do not care what the antecedents of my servants have been so long as they do that. You may stay with me as long as you choose to serve me satisfactorily. I am not at all interested in the state of your conscience."

"Madame is very kind," said Ellis. I am not a fool; I overlooked entirely the sarcasm in her voice, and, taking up my muff, closed the interview.

"But," interrupted Ellis with insolent distinctness, "I am going none the less."

With a wave of the hand I dismissed Mrs. Heyworth. I could see Ellis was not in the mood to be discreet.

"Have you a good reason for wishing to leave?" I asked, when we were alone.

"Yes, Madame."

"Is it—" I wished her to see that though I cared little about her existence, I knew more than she suspected. "Is it that you do not care to meet someone who visits me?"

"Yes, Madame."

I felt myself flush. After all, I did not expect the raw truth from her.

"One pardons indiscretions of that sort, provided one is satisfied along other lines," I said quietly.

"It was not merely an indiscretion, Madame. I lived with Mr. Newton for a year, as his wife. . . ."

VI

I do not know how I can write that on paper! My first thought was flaming anger that he had dared to insult me with his kiss. . . . I could not speak. There is a difference between inference and a bald statement of a fact. Ellis took advantage of my silence.

"If I speak frankly, Madame will dismiss me," she continued. "My mother was a lady's maid in England. My father, who did not marry her, was a British officer. My mother died on the streets. I was educated by an aunt and became a lady's maid, too. In that position I met Mr. Newton. He brought me to America. He did not tire of me. I became very ill and it was that which broke up our union. I hoped to die, thinking only of my mother's end. A clergyman, visiting the hospital, took an interest in me. I suppose I inherited fighting blood from my father. Several times I could have gone back to that easy life I had led—and, too, I had the chance to marry. But I have learned something from the clergyman and his wife. Shall I tell Madame what it is?"

I tried to think up some words to stop her, in vain. The situation was becoming absurd.

"It is this, Madame: Life without work is immoral. Marriage as an escape from work is—" she shrugged her shoulders. "I was treated as Madame is treated. I had my maid to do everything, even to think for me. He gave me jewels and perfumes—he loved the Parfum Odalisque. . . . All I needed was that little gold band on my finger to assure his most respected friends that I, too, was sold for life, and might never be free. Work is not easy but it is not degrading. I am an honest woman and no marriage could have made me that. Some day every woman must learn this."

"Ellis," I found my voice at last, "doubtless you speak well—whether your text has come from the clergy or not. But it really does not interest me. I am an anti-suffragist."

"It is Madame's last refuge. You must take every stand against equality. Rights mean responsibilities. They may make you immoral in the world's eyes unless you take your share of the burden. . . . Ah, Madame, I have been a parasite, too, but the good Lord made an opening for me so that it was less difficult to renounce—"

"Ellis," I found the voice to stop

her, "you have judged correctly. You are dismissed. Kindly do not take up any more of my time. I am late for my appointment already."

"Madame's moments are valuable," bowed Ellis and I left her pretending not to have heard.

But I am not nearly so upset by this disagreeable incident as I might be expected to be. My furs were perfect. I noticed every woman in the shop staring at them enviously, and they are so very becoming. There will be no changes to make, so I shall have them by to-morrow.

Of course, I was not at home to Bruce Newton when he called this afternoon. The thought of him chills me with disgust. After all, to be classed in any way with one's maid!

She had extraordinary ideas. It is hard to believe a girl of that class can think about such things. It seems presumptuous. She must have got it from the clergyman—getting religion, I believe it is called. Well, it will keep her straight for a while—till she marries.

Her boast of an offer of marriage was rather pathetic. It may be sincere, however. It must be rather terrible to contemplate the sort of marriage her kind is familiar with—babies and cooking and housework! Especially when she has had a taste of something better.

By now I can even find humor in her absurd insolence, pitying the married—"sold for life" was what she called it. I suppose when the beggar falls off the horse's back it is only natural for him to declare that he prefers to walk.

How stupid!

VII

ELLIS's successor is a thick-wristed Belgian who may turn out to be an Anarchist. She does her work conscientiously and clumsily.

To-night I wore my beautiful new sables and Charles noticed them.

"You are ravishing!" he cried, glowing like a dazzled schoolboy. "Is that stuff new?"

"This *stuff*," I rebuked him, "is Russian sable."

"I've heard it's terribly expensive," he stroked it admiringly.

"Is it not worth it, when I look so charming for you?" I asked, archly.

I let him take me in his arms and kiss me. The sables are made in a fashion that will not crush.

"Yes," he cooed. "You cost a lot, but you show for it."

I pushed him away then. Of course it was only his coarse way of complimenting me, but I did not like the sound of it. . . . I forbade him referring to me in that manner again.



THE RADIANT WORD

By Witter Bynner

HOW every sun shone quicker, every flame,
And every starbeam stirred
When you received me, when you said my name
And then the radiant word!

Invisible, tremendous comes the Night,
Eternity. . . .
But I can prick it with enough of light,
To see!

A DUOLOGUE

By Marguerite Hortense Shannon

LET'S sit this out; do you mind? I'm dead. The floor is awful in spots, isn't it? Dear, but I'm thirsty!

I'll get . . .

Please. Plain lemonade. The punch lacks the punch. And I'd rather have nothing than an imitation. . . . Thanks awfully. You were quick. Not much of a crowd around the lemonade, I suppose. . . . Do you like that shade on a blonde?

Why, I think it's rather pr—

It might be perhaps on an exceptionally *good* complexion. . . . I don't know what to do this summer. This disgusting war has knocked everything sky-high. Last year . . . who is that man? No, you didn't look quickly enough. Perhaps he'll pass again. . . . What was I saying? Oh, last year, in June, we went abroad and we were to meet some cousins in Berlin the tenth of July. . . . Do you see that girl in cerise? She goes to my hairdresser, and wouldn't you think she had oceans of hair? . . . Oh, I know that man with the moustache. Isn't he distinguished looking?

Which—

Facing here now, fussing with his tie. Summer before last he was at my hotel, and everybody speculated about what he did. I said he was distinctly an intellectual type, but, of course, I'm as apt to be wrong as the next. He's in the carpet business. I wonder who he's with? . . . You know, it makes me perfectly furious the way . . . isn't that a pretty blue? I wear that a great deal . . . the way men act at summer hotels. Constantly on guard. One would think the girls were perfect

ogresses with matrimonial intentions. . . . Have you ever noticed that some ravishing men marry awful frumps? It's the mystery of mysteries to me how it's done. It's certain the formula will never be published. . . . Now, I like the way *they* dance. Of course, she's just a vertical line and it's no effort for her to get about. I have been meaning to reduce for so long, but people say you're just right and all that sort of thing, so why should I give up whipped cream? How much do you think I weigh?

Why, I don't believe I'm a very good ju—

Well, you don't think I'm too stout, do you? . . . Do you see that peculiar-looking woman standing near the orchestra?

In white? My cousin—

Is that so? I was going to say she *has* an air. . . . You haven't been to these dances before? I don't remember seeing you.

I—

It's rather a nice crowd, don't you think? Of course the subscription is high. Do you think you'll come again? . . . I don't see how you stand your gloves. After the first dance off mine come. . . . Would you rather have danced this? I really thought I would be doing you a good turn to sit it out. I don't do a particularly good hesitation. Let me see, who have I next? Heaven help me—Corwin! When it comes to dancing, Corwin is a perfectly good broker. . . . I don't see why that . . . Quick, the couple that just stopped. Isn't that Lorna Child? She goes to my tailor. I heard her father has barrels of money and she china-

paints for charity. Fancy! I don't see how she gets the time. I rush around all day, but I don't seem to accomplish anything. Of course, I don't get up very early. . . . And, another thing, she makes nearly every stitch. . . . Do you ever speculate about what people do? My father says I have splendid intuition, and if I weren't so lazy he'd have me down at his office sizing people up. I wonder if I can guess what you do. It's something downtown, of course. Lawyer? Insurance? Broker? Advertising?

None of those, merely a pub—

Oh, fine! You're just the man I want. When I was sixteen I started a diary; just my own observations and all that, and I think it will make very interesting reading. It's original, anyway. Where are you, I'll bring it down. . . . Oh, are *they* engaged? Last year it was Suzanne Denny, so I don't think the feminine sex has a monopoly on the quality of fickleness. . . . Do you think we're ever going to get any winter? I'm superstitious about crowing over things, but it does seem as though we're going to get through without any messy storms. . . . There's a girl sitting this side of those palms and really I don't believe she's stopped talking since she sat down. It isn't

always the most talkative person that says the most, is it? . . . I hope I don't catch cold here.

Would you like to—

I never had a cold in my life until this winter, and one day about three weeks ago I went to a bridge at Mrs. Wigham's and the place was so unevenly heated, old-fashioned house full of big halls and drafts, and I wore a very thin, pale blue blouse, and going from one room to another . . . I wish she wouldn't move her arm like that; the most ungraceful thing . . . Aren't they playing that very fast? Oh, second encore. Suppose they're in a hurry to finish it. I don't see why people demand so many. I'm usually only too glad to stop after the first . . . Oh, *hello*, Corwin. I was afraid you wouldn't know where to look for me . . . Well Mr. Ritchie, I certainly enjoyed our little chat. I think an exchange of ideas with an interesting person is *such* a delight! Oh, I *am* sorry. Perhaps if you try a little menthol on your forehead . . . Well it's too bad you've got to go . . . Good night, you won't forget your promise about my diary?

Corwin, that man is the *last word* in bores! He never opens his mouth.



NO woman ever applied for a divorce without first consulting her friends. And no woman ever applied for a divorce who took their advice.



THE husband of a queen is still a husband, and hence to be pitied.



A WOMAN is never wholly contented. Even though she may regard her children as perfect, she can always imagine improvements in their father.

THE JOY OF DYING

By Charles Belmont Davis

MERCITA HOBBS dropped the evening paper on her lap, clasped her hands behind her head and stared steadily at the freshly calso-mined ceiling.

"That sounds like a wonderful white sale at Dobey's to-morrow," she said. "One ought to pick up some real bargains—that is if the advertisement doesn't lie. They claim to have some combinations for three-twenty-five marked down—"

Rather vague as to just what his wife had been saying, Hobbs appeared from behind Dillon's rival evening paper and in a dazed way glanced across the center-table.

"Yes, of course," he stammered, "combinations. Cheap, eh?"

Without removing her eyes from the ceiling Mercita's pretty lips puckered and when wavered into a mirthless, almost cynical smile.

"I can remember, Bexley, dear," she cooed, "when you were rather keen about lingerie for your little wifey. But that was six long months ago—*six* long months."

"Six very short months I should say," Hobbs temporized with a rather feeble effort at gallantry. "If I am not very enthusiastic about white sales or any other kind of sales just now, my dear, you know the reason. Our income is unfortunately a fixed quantity and we have been living a trifle beyond it. The calculations I made before our wedding, now that they have been put to a practical test, have not quite worked out, that's all. A little economy for a few months and by the early summer we shall be all square again. Why, only this evening, on my way home, I saw

some plaid ties in Kendrick's window marked down to twenty-five cents. In my bachelor days I should have bought several without a moment's thought, but the fact that I couldn't buy them now didn't worry me at all. Not a bit of it. I said to myself, 'Bexley,' said I, 'your old ties are good enough. And what if you can't take a few plaid ties home with you? Haven't you got the prettiest and the brightest wife in the town of Dillon waiting there for you?' Now that's the way you ought to feel about advertisements of white sales and—and things."

From her youth Mercita had been an omnivorous reader of all kinds of literature and had been born with an unusually retentive memory as well as a voice that was not only sweet and melodious but particularly well adapted to declamation. Under the circumstances it was quite natural that during an argument or even ordinary conversation she should quote freely from the classic authors. On this particular occasion her somewhat emotional mind turned to Stevenson's "Markheim," and, without vouchsafing a glance towards her husband, she delivered the following quotation directly at the ceiling. "If I be condemned to evil acts there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all."

Hobbs put his hand before his mouth and giggled audibly. Then he went over to the hearth, and, with his hands clasped behind his back, stood before

the coal-grate fire and through his gold-rimmed eye-glasses beamed down pleasantly on his wife.

"That's a cheerful little thing," he said with a somewhat conscious chuckle. "Cute idea of yours, my dear, to take your life because you can't afford a suit of new underwear."

Mrs. Hobbs turned her eyes from the ceiling to the weak, smiling face and the short, stooping figure of her husband and then back again to the ceiling.

"What matters the excuse," she said gravely, "so long as one's conscience is satisfied with the cause?"

The mother of Mrs. Hobbs had been conspicuous in clubs, a leader in the expression of all of women's most advanced and broadest views, and Mercita had inherited the greater part of her parent's somewhat advanced theories.

"I don't see what the cause has got to do with it," Hobbs said frankly perplexed at his wife's rather enigmatical speech. "Suicide is suicide and suicide is always wrong. It's criminal. If you try it and don't get away with it they can lock you up."

"They can in New York," Mercita corrected her husband with just the suggestion of a sneer. "They can't in this or any of the more enlightened states of the Middle West."

Mercita had a way of correcting her husband with statements the truthfulness of which his commercial rather than general training had not qualified him to question. Therefore, partly as a compliment to her superior education and partly to hide his own ignorance, he usually accepted what she said as final. But the idea of treating suicide so lightly he found most difficult to pass by without another word of protest. Self-destruction had always appealed to him as the act of a helpless coward or a lunatic and as a subject only fit for discussion among doctors and criminologists.

"All right," he said with a considerable show of feeling, "you may be right about the state laws on the subject but you must admit that the body of a suicide can't be buried in any first-class

Christian cemetery. And in the Catholic Church—"

"A barbaric tradition of religions," his wife interrupted, "that is crumbling as fast as the religions are themselves. The old-time fear that the suicide once had for the punishment hereafter is now a bugaboo only fit to scare old men and children with. To prove that I'm right all you've got to do is to look up the statistics and see how steadily the cases of suicide have kept step with the advancement of education and the advancement means the promotion of materialism and the happily growing disbelief in all things supernatural, and this book of fairy tales called the Bible."

As Mercita fairly hurled her words at him Hobbs remained silent, impatiently locking and unlocking his fingers behind his back. It was as if she were pounding him in the face with her fists. In the days of his courtship he had always regretted that Mercita so seldom went to church with him; after their marriage he was sorry to find that she did not say her prayers, but his religion had always been something too sacred to him, too near his heart, for him to discuss with anyone, and, heretofore, she, on her part, had respected his feelings by avoiding the subject. But now she was wantonly defaming his belief and actually upholding the crime of suicide as a decent and respectable act. The walls of the house that he had built after so much effort and with so much care were crumbling about his head and his dull, slow-plodding brain saw no way to prevent the total destruction of his home. Even had he had the temerity to refute his wife's words he would not have done so. Imperious, cruel as she might be, his whole heart was filled with his great love for her, and his innate chivalry for women alone held his tongue in leash. Therefore, with no further words but a clumsy effort at a bow which was supposed to interpret his injured dignity, he went out into the hallway, put on his hat and overcoat, and left the house.

It was a cool, pleasant evening in late February. Light, gray clouds

floated leisurely across a whitish-silver moon and an occasional star peeped down on the deserted avenue lined with its rows of leafless poplars and semi-detached villas. With his usual regard for health, Hobbs buttoned his overcoat tightly over his chest and, thrusting his gloved hands deep in his pockets, started to walk slowly in the direction towards which his feet unconsciously led him. It was quite the most unhappy promenade on which he had ever set forth, and the saddest part of it was that Hobbs himself thoroughly realized that however far the walk and his thoughts might take him conditions so far as he was concerned would remain absolutely unchanged. As chief clerk in one of the leading hardware stores of the town he was sure of a certain income, but the firm was old-fashioned and conservative, satisfied with its present profits, and so long as there was no perceptible increase in the profits there would surely be none in Hobbs's salary. He had no other sources of income and his wife had spent the last cent of her patrimony on her trousseau. Indeed it was her penniless condition to which the town of Dillon attributed the willingness of so pretty and intelligent a girl as Mercita to marry so dull although eminently respectable a young man as Bexley Hobbs.

Ever since their marriage Hobbs's financial plans had gone wrong. His figures as to the rent, electric-light, telephone, interest on his life insurance policy, had all proved correct, but almost every other item of expense had far exceeded his most liberal calculations. The reserve fund which he had stored up against possible illness or some unforeseen calamity had long since been swept away and he was already in debt to several of the tradespeople. Of late he had practised the most rigid economy, but Mercita who neither understood nor cared for the details of housekeeping had done very little to lighten his burden. That his wife should care for pretty clothes and the things dear to all women's hearts Hobbs

admitted to be natural and fair, but that she should express her rage over the lack of money to buy a new hat or a suit of underwear by attacking the Christian religion or threatening to commit suicide appealed to him as neither the one nor the other. The idea that Mercita should for one moment ever think of taking her life was of course too absurd for Hobbs to consider, and he decided to dismiss it from his mind for all time.

He hastened his lagging steps, and, in the effort to enliven his thoughts, tried to whistle a tune and glanced up at the fleecy clouds chasing each other across the moon. But try as he might he found it difficult to divert his thoughts from Mercita and her troubles. When she had complained that her trousseau was worn out Hobbs freely admitted to himself that she was no doubt right. Also, she was perfectly correct when she contended that since her marriage the young men of Dillon no longer asked her to dances and to the theater. Now they left that pleasure to her husband and her husband did not avail himself of that pleasure. That Hobbs had not the money available for such luxuries did not alter the fact that it was Mercita's marriage to him that had deprived her of them.

Once more Hobbs quickened his pace and tried to interest himself in the beauty of the heavens, but he found himself reluctantly admitting that for the last two months Mercita and he had spent every evening at their own fire-side, and that from this or for some other cause his wife had been constantly growing irritable and dissatisfied. Not only had this spirit of discontent grown upon her but she had often suffered of late from fits of real depression, and now that he gave the matter his serious consideration he remembered that she had lost much of her former brilliant coloring and had frequently looked decidedly pale and wan. Unconsciously Hobbs came to a sudden halt, and, in a confused way having stared about him, found that he had walked a good half-

mile from his home. Sharply he turned and started to retrace his steps.

Again he tried to whistle and to fill his mind with pleasant, hopeful thoughts of the spring when he would have paid his debts and would be in a position to give Mercita some new clothes and a few jolly outings. But such happy thoughts were wholly forced and his disturbed mind cast them out and once more raced back to Mercita. Of course even in her unenviable and discontented condition she would not consider suicide, but Hobbs could not help regretting that any woman so emotional as his wife should hold the crime of suicide so lightly, indeed should regard the act as no crime at all. From a quick walk he broke into a trot.

Exactly why he should make such haste to reach his home Hobbs in his breathless, excited state would not have admitted to himself, even could he have done so. But the seed of fear, the dread of oncoming disaster and disgrace had been planted in his heart, and now that his cottage was in sight he fairly flew along the hard clay path. A few minutes later Mercita heard the front door thrown back and saw her husband suddenly appear before her at the sitting-room door. He was quite breathless and when he saw her sitting calmly by the center-table she noticed the curious look of joy that flamed up in his wide-open eyes. He gave a quick sigh, and, for a moment, leaned heavily against the door-frame.

"Bexley," Mercita demanded, "what is the matter with you? Have you seen a ghost or have you been training for the Y. M. C. A. sports? My dear, you're a sight."

By way of answer to his wife's pleasantries Hobbs smiled weakly at her and then pulling himself together went back to the hallway and hung up his hat and coat.

With no conspicuous change, life at the Hobbs's cottage drifted on as before. Hobbs spent his days at the store and Mercita read and occasionally attended a meeting of some society de-

voted to the advancement of women. At night, after supper, they read the local evening papers and played cards, sometimes by themselves and sometimes with neighbors who had dropped in for the evening. Mercita grew a trifle more pale, at least Hobbs thought she did. That she became more dissatisfied and despondent and that Hobbs was more worried and solicitous about his wife there could be no question whatever. Two weeks after the night that Mercita had first expressed her views on suicide she went to see a friend who was lying ill at a hospital. That evening she told Hobbs of her visit.

"It has a great charm for me," she said, "the life of a nurse. They see so much of human nature and I've always loved the study of drugs. Even the rows of little bottles in the glass case fascinate me. I saw a bottle of laudanum there to-day which I was greatly tempted to steal. It's curious how in the old days people were allowed to carry the most deadly poison about with them in a signet ring, but now we have to steal it at hospitals or get harmless doses at a drug-store and then only with a doctor's prescription.

"And yet they call it a free country. Why there are some states in the enlightened East where no one is allowed to own a revolver without a permit from the mayor or the governor or something."

Hobbs lowered his newspaper and forced a smile to his lips.

"That's only a precaution the law takes," he explained, "for the protection of the mentally weak or people who are subject to violent passions. With a deadly poison or a revolver at hand there are no doubt many men and women who in a moment of—"

"Did you read about that man who killed himself in Buffalo yesterday?" Mercita interrupted, and, without waiting for her husband's reply ran on. "Well, he went to a small hotel, stuffed up the cracks of the windows and doors with newspapers and turned on the gas. All he left was one line scribbled on the back of an old envelope: 'Not good

enough.' Now there was a man after my own heart. Nobody asked him permission to bring him into the world and he didn't ask any one's permission to leave it."

Hobbs did not continue the conversation but that night he preceded his wife to their bedroom and having taken a revolver from a bureau drawer where he had always kept it in case of burglars locked it in his desk. Then he went carefully about the room looking for any article with which Mercita could possibly make an end of herself, but finding nothing went to bed and tried to sleep. The next day when he returned from work he found Mercita ill in bed, and he insisted on sending for the family physician, Dr. Brandt. When the doctor left Mercita's bedroom he found Hobbs waiting for him in the parlour. Dr. Brandt was a stout, florid, cheerful man, and, in his physical aspect as well as in his mental attitude towards life, in striking contrast to little, stoop-shouldered, nervous Hobbs.

"Nothing serious, I hope?" said Hobbs, drawing the doctor into the dimly-lighted parlour.

"Not at all," said Brandt assuringly, "not at all serious. Nerves upset and a little run down, I should think. Needs a tonic and more fresh air and exercise. I'm going to give her some strychnine, and you see that she takes the pills regularly. I'll leave the prescription at Blair's on my way down town."

Hobbs felt his throat getting dry and he spoke with some little difficulty.

"But strychnine is a pretty strong poison, isn't it, doctor?" he asked.

"It is if you take too much of it at one time," Brandt laughed. "Don't worry, Bexley; Mercita's a careful patient and I don't imagine you're afraid of her taking an overdose on purpose."

Hobbs forced a smile to his parched lips. "Naturally not," he said, "naturally not. I suppose I'm a little timid about poisons—always have been. I had a friend once whose wife used to threaten to kill herself."

Brandt tossed up his hands. "Then God help your friend," he said. "But

at that I'll bet his wife took it out in threats. It's a curious thing, Bexley. History shows that about four men commit suicide to one woman, but if the statistics could be taken I'll bet they would prove that four thousand women threaten to one that finally does the act."

Hobbs wet his lips with his tongue and nodded gravely. "Very curious," he said.

"Curious," Brandt repeated, "curious! Why it's the most cruel and insidious weapon that God ever put in the power of human beings. In my own professional experience I've known several men whose wives had the habit. Not one of the women had the first idea of killing herself even if she'd had the nerve. But the husbands went about with this sword hanging over their heads night and day and such constant terror in their hearts that it became an obsession. It cramped their lives, gradually used up their nervous systems and in two cases the health of the men cracked entirely. Of course, the psychology of it was that the husbands thought that this sword that their wives had swung over their heads hung by a thread, while as a matter of fact it was held by the cords of fear and the innate love of life which, as cords go, are about as big and strong as a couple of wire hausers."

"It does seem pretty hard on the men," Hobbs protested mildly, "especially when they love their wives. It's the one argument that just through his fear of the consequences a husband can't answer, and, then, of course, one can never be sure that his wife is not the one of the four thousand."

"One out of four thousand is a long chance," Brandt laughed. "Anyhow I wouldn't worry about Mercita. Mercita's not over vain and this talk about suicide is only woman's egotism carried to the highest possible degree. Good-night to you."

For some time after Brandt had left Hobbs remained alone in the parlour, and, so far as he was able, repeated over and over again all that the physi-

cian had said. But although he found much comfort and probable truth in Brandt's words he could not help regretting that the physician should have recommended strychnine as a tonic for his wife—especially in her present nervous and discontented condition. In time he went to Mercita's room, and sitting by the bedside tried to amuse her by telling of what he had done during the day and by reading bits of news from the evening papers. Just when he had apparently succeeded in slightly arousing her interest the boy from the drug-store arrived with the strychnine. The little white tablets were in a small bottle, and, with a show of complete indifference, Hobbs handed them to his wife.

"Do you know what these are?" she asked.

"Brandt told me he was going to give you strychnine, I think," Bexley said carelessly.

"That's right," Mercita said with a wan smile, "and, Bexley dear, don't get them mixed up with your digestive tablets. They're pretty strong, you know." For a few moments she held the vial up before her and stared at the contents. "Half of those, Bexley, would be quite enough to do for you—quite. Fetch me a glass of water, won't you please?"

Hobbs hurried downstairs for the water, and when he returned he found Mercita sitting up in bed. In one hand she held the empty vial and in the palm of the other lay the little white tablets. As Bexley approached the bed Mercita glanced up at her husband and then carefully poured all of the tablets except one back into the bottle.

Although, on the following morning when Hobbs started to work, the condition of his wife seemed much improved, he left her with a feeling of real reluctance. Throughout the long day the picture of Mercita sitting up in bed, the white pellets cupped in her hand, was always before him. He did his best to make light of his fears and tried to console himself with Brandt's words of the preceding evening. But the terror that Mercita might even then

be lying dead never left him. Half a dozen times, on the pretext of asking how she was, he called her on the telephone. However, the last time that he called she asked him not to bother her again as she wanted to sleep, and, thus, his last source of communication was cut off. Instead of going to lunch he went to the public library and read all he could find in the encyclopedias concerning poisons, and especially strychnine and its antidotes. That evening on his way home he stopped in at a drug-store where he was unknown and bought some chloroform and chloral hydrate. But all that he had read that day and all of the books on toxicology, which he consulted afterwards, held out but little hope if the patient had taken any considerable dose of the fatal drug.

Although Mercita continued to improve, that is so far as her physical condition was concerned, Hobbs grew more restless and his mind harboured but the one subject. In his moments of leisure at the shop it was his only topic of conversation with the other men, and whenever he could afford the time he hurried to the library and read what the most noted authorities had written on suicide and its causes. At home he was in constant dread of hurting his wife's feelings, and no longer with his former feeble arguments even pretended to combat her wishes. For fear of offending her he continued to go further in debt, and he became greatly alarmed that his employers would learn that he was living beyond his income. But Mercita was not satisfied and at times broke out in violent tirades against her unhappy lot. After such scenes she would usually fly to her room and Hobbs would be left alone in the little parlour, or, when he could stand the oppression of the room no longer, he would leave the house and walk until he was physically exhausted. At such times his mind constantly visualized the scene that would greet him on his return. As he entered the door the maid, crying hysterically, would greet him with the tragic news and he would bound up the stairways to his

wife's bedroom. There he would find Mercita, the woman he loved, the only woman he ever could love, was passing forever out of his life and he alone was to blame. For had not this lovely girl given herself to him and had he not failed utterly to make her life worth the living? He could see her slight, beautiful body on the bed; the look of terror in the big blue eyes, the head jerked back, the limbs extended, the arched back. And there by her bedside he, Bexley Hobbs, who loved her better than all the world beside, would stand helpless and hopeless and impotently watch the end. Helpless and hopeless he would stand there and watch the scene that would sear his brain with a scar that would last as long as he did.

Such a scene, however, took place only in the half-crazed brain of Bexley Hobbs. Mercita continued to take her one tablet a day and to thrive on it. The cure had been progressing for about a fortnight when one evening she returned home much later than was her custom. To her husband who had been anxiously awaiting her coming she at once imparted her all important news. A week hence there was to be a gala meeting of the feminists of the state at the Opera House and she had been chosen to make the speech of welcome to the distinguished visitors.

"Bexley," she said, her eyes shining with excitement and suspense, "it is going to be the greatest and the happiest hour of my life. But the occasion demands that I be properly dressed. I'm sorry because I know that you are hard-up, but I must either get a new evening dress, and a really good one, or refuse this honor which the committee has offered me."

It was an honor, a great honor to his wife, and Hobbs appreciated it but he had no money, he was in debt, and his only assets were his life insurance policy and the few dollars he had in his pocket. His heart was of lead and he turned his unhappy eyes helplessly towards those of his wife.

"I don't know how it can be done, Mercita," he said, "but give me until

to-morrow and I'll promise you to do my best."

During supper and afterwards as they sat together in the parlour Mercita showed only too plainly that her feelings had been wounded and that her disappointment over her husband's half-hearted promise was very keen. At ten o'clock Hobbs kissed his wife good night and said that he would take a short walk before going to bed. Left alone, Mercita's anger over what she considered the inadequacy of her husband to properly provide for her increased and she set about to devise some scheme whereby she could force him to accede to her wishes. In a short time she had thought out the details of a plan which she hastened to put into execution. Going to her bedroom she quickly undressed and put on her most attractive nightgown. Taking the bottle of strychnine from the drawer where she kept it she found that seven tablets remained. These she put in an envelope which she carefully hid in the drawer. The empty bottle and a glass half-filled with water she placed on the table by the head of her bed. Then she turned on all the electric lights and went to bed. When her husband returned from his walk she would assume a great drowsiness and would revive only after much effort on the part of Hobbs. Under the circumstances Mercita could not well believe that he would refuse her anything—certainly not a new dress.

* * * *

Mercita's bedroom was already filled with the morning sunshine when she was awakened by a loud knocking at her door. Before she was quite conscious or had realized that the night had passed and that she had spent it alone, the door was thrown back and she saw the frightened face of her maid, and, in the doorway, standing behind the maid, the big heavy form of Doctor Brandt. The physician gently brushed aside the terror-stricken maid and going over to the bed took one of Mercita's hands in both of his own.

"Little girl," he said, "I've bad news

for you. Try to be strong, won't you?"

"Bexley?" she whispered.

Brandt nodded.

"Dead?"

"I'm afraid so, Mercita. I don't believe it's wise or kind to hold back the truth."

Mercita stared at the physician with wide understanding eyes.

"But how," she stammered, "how?"

"They found him in a little hotel downtown. It seems he took a room

there late last night. He'd turned on the gas and had gone to sleep. Bexley didn't suffer, my dear, he didn't suffer at all."

For a few moments there was a tense silence and then Mercita asked:

"Did he—did Bexley leave no word?"

"Only a short note for me," Brandt said; "just two lines scribbled on an envelope. He told me where I could find his life insurance papers and to see that you got the money."



TWO SONGS

By John Hanlon

I

WHY do you mourn for Love that dies,
O Woman with the hardened eyes?
For you Love never lived.

II

Love came to me from out the morning mist,
With roses which the pallid dew had kissed;
But as the day grew old, and gray and chill,
Across the summit of the barren hill,
Love went away.



REMARKS OF A GREAT ACTOR

BELIEVE me, I had them going.

Prince Herbert Tobacco is always on my dressing-room table.

I said to Frohman, "What! You offer *me* . . ."

I am glad to commend the Barrow Collar.

Imagine playing up to that old cow!

I am always glad to visit this city. I made my first great success here.

I simply could not live without the Jewel Safety Razor.

My manager, Mr. Rosenstein. . .



A BACHELOR is one who wants a wife but is glad that he hasn't got her.

CHILD-LOVE

By Harry Kemp

SHE was eight and I was nine. I loved her, and meant to marry her when we grew big, like grown-up people.

She wore her hair in a little straight black braid down her back. She had dancing, black, mischievous eyes. Her name was Matilda. She smelt deliciously of soapiness and health. She had round apple cheeks, shining and smooth.

Her people used to come and play cards at my house with my folks. She came with them.

At first she was shy, and stood off in a corner, eyeing me suspiciously. But finally we made up to each other, and I urged her to come out into the yard to see my pets. I had three rabbits in a warren in the back-yard. I showed her how I had fixed wire at the bottom so they couldn't burrow out. I showed her my chickens and pigeons, and, the *pièce de resistance*, the tame garter snake, which I kept in a box in the cellar.

I confided to Matilda that I was going to be a great explorer when I grew up, I told her also how brave I was, and how I had fought a boy named Vernie for an hour straight, in a corn-field, till the farmer came and ran us away.

She shuddered at my talk about fighting, and said she thought it was wicked, though she admitted having once pulled hair with another girl over the possession of a doll.

And thus we talked as we squatted down by the rabbit hutch. It was there that, moved by a whim, she took my hand and quite boldly kissed me on the cheek. And I put my arms about

her and kissed her full on her pouty rosebud of a mouth.

The next time her people came they did not bring her along. It made my heart feel empty not to see her.

I went out and whipped my spaniel dog and cried and cried. That night I lay awake for a long time wishing I was dead. And when at length I fell asleep I dreamed that I was a knight resplendent in armor, and that she was sitting, tall and grown-up and beautiful, in a castle window, waving me good-bye as I rode forth on a perilous quest, I wearing her token in my helmet.

In the morning when I woke, the sunlight was already streaming in broadly at the window. I got up, took a slate on my knee, and wrote her name on it, and underneath, mine. Then I crossed out the similar letters to find out whether we loved each other or not.

I learned where she lived and sought her out. It was not enough to see her only when her folks visited my folks. I wanted her for a steady playmate. She had a tent in her yard. There we played at keeping house. She had three dolls, all girls, she said,—and she vowed that she would never be happy till the doctor had brought her a boy. She told me quite solemnly that the father of her children, her former husband, was dead, and asked me if I would become their father in his stead. I said of course I would, but suggested that only grown-ups got married.

"Well, then, we'll make believe we're married and *play* papa and mamma." So we became man and wife. The tent was our house. She got out little dishes, and we ate together.

Time and again, as she was dressing

and undressing her dolls, would she wish that she had a son. I became quite concerned over her desire. Finally I stole a male Japanese doll from a tempestuous little girl who was then visiting at our house. Proudly I carried it to Matilda.

She was quite moved.

"Now at last we have a son!" she exclaimed.

We decided to name him Stanley, after the hero whose adventures thrilled me the most.

In the meantime, the other boys, with whom I used to play Indians and Robinson Crusoe, began to mock me, calling me "Girl-boy," and other names even less mellifluous. I soon had more real fights on my hands than I could conveniently handle.

As for Matilda and me, we took oath that we would get married really and truly when we grew up, and that we would have the doctor bring us real children, a whole dozen of them at a time. And I was to become wealthy and famous. And we were to have coaches and servants, and ice-cream to eat at each meal. And our love would never end.

One day Matilda's mother chanced to overhear some of our talk and, with her sophisticated mind, she became quite concerned, told me I must run home immediately, and ordered Matilda into the house.

I went home wishing to God I were dead, now we were separated, and they meant never to let us meet again. I would do something desperate, I would. I would go away somewhere and get killed and make them all sorry.

Pretty soon Matilda's mother came to see my mother. They talked both seriously and laughingly. I could see that they were discussing us.

"The little imps," I overheard my mother say.

Then they both laughed together very loudly.

I was told that henceforth I must keep away from Matilda, and could not find out the reason why.

I wondered what I had done that was

wrong. I tried to see her again and again. But they seemed never to let her out of the house any more.

I was neglecting my pets. My rabbits would have starved if mother had not fed them for me. She let my snake go, having a horror of it. My favorite chicken grew strange and I couldn't pick her up any more.

One day I went and concealed myself in a grove near Matilda's house. I had no hope of seeing her, but I suffered from an ache to be near her. Suddenly the unexpected happened. I saw a flutter of white on the front porch. It was she. I whistled very low. She looked in my direction. I beckoned to her. She immediately ran down the steps, came through the fence,—and then I felt her hot little lips clinging to mine, and my face was wet with her tears and mine at the same time.

"They won't let me see you or play with you any more," she cried.

"Why not?" I demanded vehemently.

"Mamma says you are a bad boy."

"And my mother says you are a bad girl."

We cried a little more.

"Don't they know that we are engaged to be married when we grow up?" I asked.

"Yes—they know—I told mamma that, and she laughed and told papa, and he laughed, too!"

I clenched my fists. "I wish we were grown up now—I'd show them."

But soon Matilda's family moved far away to another city.

My mother, growing tired of taking care of my pets for me, gave them away to a cousin.

I felt so miserable, so wretched. I have never felt so badly in all my life since. The sorrows of childhood are real and terrible. A child cannot season his sorrow with philosophy or experience. For him there is no perspective, there is only the brutality of the present fact.

My mother instinctively realized this, and strove to comfort me. But my father teased me and was very much amused. He used to call me "Matilda,"

and I used to hate him violently for it.

For a time I would cry at night and my mother would come up and sit down by me, holding my hand till I fell asleep.

But childhood soon forgets . . .

it was not long till Matilda had become a memory, and I soon went back to the gang and played Indians and Robinson Crusoe with redoubled vigor.



FIREWORKS

By Ruth Clark

SHE sat at one end of the porch. He sat at the other end. She was seventy years old and he was even older. Twilight was drifting into night.

Suddenly, against the sky, a rocket shot up.

The old man stirred.

"Jane, see that?"

"Huh?"

"See that rocket? Maybe this is Fourth o' July."

"Then to-morrow's our weddin' anniversary if to-day's Fourth o' July."

"No Jane, yesterday. We was married on the third, wasn't we?"

"Why o' course we wasn't. We was married on the fifth. I know we was because we sat and watched the fireworks the night before our weddin'. Don't you recollect?"

"Guess you're right. And I was all afire then, too." The old man resurrected an ancient laugh. He got up and shoved his chair over to the middle of the porch. "Janie, bring your chair alongside mine. Maybe there'll be more fireworks. You can see better here."

She dragged her chair over to his.

There were more fireworks. There was one ambitious balloon that went swaggering across the sky and caught on fire and burned up. And there were wonderful red lights that reached clear to the porch where the old people sat. And there were Roman candles and pinwheels. But there were no more rockets.

So soon it was all over. A few spurts and spasms of light, and then the steady stars shone on unrivalled.

The old man and woman sat still, side by side.

They were sound asleep.



A MAN is seldom jealous of his wife's first husband, but there are times, no doubt, when he is frightfully envious.



I N talking to many a pretty woman one forgets her face entirely.

THE END OF CONCESSIONS

By Robert Carlton Brown

I WILL throw away myself. I will be a thing of civilization. Kept down. I will submit to donning my views ready-made as delivered in my morning newspaper. I will regard the views of my intimates above my own. I will say "Thank you" to the policeman when, park-benched, I feel the poke of

his club at the stomach-pit of my dozing self. I will not swear. I will not drink those things that make me more myself. I will not smoke in the subway or defile the Stars and Stripes. But, by God, with or without your husbandly permission, I will crush with caresses the woman I love who loves me.



MOON MAGIC

By A. C. Rose

LAST night a golden moon rode high
In the blue arches of the sky.
And silver birch trees by the stream
Looked like pale ladies in a dream.
In the deep woods no creature stirred
And hushed was every singing bird.
The very leaves were still, it seemed
That the whole world in moonlight dreamed.
Deep in the shadows, still and cool
I came upon a reedy pool.
Lillies and fern and maiden hair
And yellow flags were growing there.
Suddenly faint and far away
I heard the fairy pipers play.
And saw the fairy dancers pass
Like jewels sparkling in the grass.
But when the moon put out her light
I knew how lonely was the night.
* * *
To-day I looked but looked in vain
I shall not find that place again.

PERRY AND BALLANTYNE

By Maurice Joy

PERRY and Ballantyne had always been together. They were born on the same day, in the same village, in neighboring houses. They went to the same school and reached the same standard of efficiency in each form, Perry by dint of industry and a little brains, Ballantyne by dint of brains and a little industry. Such is the law of compensation.

They were not separated until they came to choose their professions. Perry chose medicine because he had a sentimental longing to assuage the sufferings of humanity, Ballantyne chose the law because he was something of a merry jester and found humanity on the whole a very laughable thing.

While they studied they lived together. And while Perry forgave Ballantyne an occasional drunken bout and other wild escapades, Ballantyne forgave Perry his old-maidenish ways. Those who met them said: "How can two such fellows live together?" Perry and Ballantyne could hardly have answered: they had always lived together. Perry was too weak to suggest a change, and Ballantyne was too lazy.

After they got their degrees, they had a hard time trying to make a living, but gradually they made progress, and it was characteristic of them that their incomes seemed to increase by almost the same amounts every year. So they continued to live together. And Ballantyne was still a merry dog, though he rarely got drunk now, but Perry became a member of the local vestry.

2

It was through his clergyman that Perry met his first wife. He came home one evening, and raved about her

in a manner which astonished Ballantyne who had never seen a romantic strain in his friend. He was so impressed with the reality of Perry's passion that he asked at last:

"Has she an income?"

"An income, my dear fellow!" replied Perry. "She has a cool five thousand a year."

"Ah," said Ballantyne, "that explains it."

"You don't mean to insinuate—," began Perry.

"I don't insinuate," interrupted Ballantyne. "I merely say—that explains it. You don't imagine I believe in love, do you?"

Perry was too weak to rebel against his friend's cynicism, and let it go at that. But he pursued his amour, nevertheless, and one day Ballantyne found himself compelled to give a party for the affianced couple. The party was a great success, so great that the future Mrs. Perry exclaimed enthusiastically: "You must come and live with us, you poor bachelor."

The two friends were happy at this solution of a problem which had begun to worry them, and Perry added: "Of course, you'll come, and you'll pay only a third of the household expenses, Ballantyne—won't it be jolly?"

Ballantyne smiled. Mrs. Perry-to-be liked Ballantyne—I forgot to mention that she was a widow.

This first matrimonial affair of Mr. Perry's went very well. It was a complete success, Mrs. Perry dying at the end of fifteen months and leaving Perry her entire estate, with the exception of some little tokens of esteem which she left Ballantyne.

On the whole she had been a very faithful wife, far more faithful than a widow might be expected to be. She was, however, rather ugly and fat, and Ballantyne was occupied with a Moorish princess from the Alhambra. Mrs. Perry did not tempt him except on one or two occasions after parties or visits to Brighton, when the spirit of romance was awakened in her, but on those occasions her own knight-errant was on hand to save her from damnation.

Perry, by her graveside, could truthfully claim that he had performed the first duty of a British husband: he had watched carefully over his wife's honor. His own had not been in danger, although once, in his student days, he had been accosted in the Euston Road. Apart from some natural pride in this circumstance, his chief pleasure in recalling it was in a thankfulness for the dangers he had valiantly passed.

3

Perry was very disconsolate after his wife's death, but his practice grew by leaps and bounds since her fortune enabled him to take a house in Harley Street. The British public believes that every doctor who makes money is a genius, even if he makes it by marriage. Perry became a specialist in bone surgery, and was immensely popular with ladies who, having heard of his marriage with a rich widow and his rapid and brilliant rise in his profession, believed him to be romantic.

Ballantyne was in his smoking jacket in a very bad mood when Perry, late for dinner, arrived home one evening and announced that he was about to marry again. Ballantyne had not heard of the wooing. Perry was sensitive. So he asked:

"Who is she?"

"Mrs. Talbot," answered Perry, rather sheepishly.

"Another rich widow!" grunted Ballantyne. "You're making a habit of it."

Ballantyne again gave a party to celebrate Perry's second betrothal. Again the Mrs. Perry-to-be grew enthusiastic over her betrothed's friend—"I shall never forgive John for not in-

roducing us sooner. Of course you will live with us. I couldn't dream of disturbing you." And Perry added: "Same arrangement as before, Ballantyne, three equal shares."

But he spoke without enthusiasm, while Ballantyne accepted with alacrity. Mrs. Talbot, I may say, was charming and vivacious. She had not been introduced to Perry by the clergyman of his parish.

4

Ballantyne was tall and handsome. Perry was small and commonplace. But that had never struck Perry until he was married a second time. Ballantyne had been just Ballantyne, familiar as the sun and moon. When it struck Perry, it struck him very hard. They were at dinner one evening, and Perry was reading the paper, while Ballantyne and Mrs. Perry were engaged in a lively talk. That had happened on many evenings: it was Perry's idea of really being at home—when a man could read his paper without interruption. He did it even when Ballantyne was dining out.

When a lull came in the conversation Perry looked up from his paper, and saw his wife's eyes travel from Ballantyne to himself, and back again. He could not explain what he felt, but that evening, after discreetly inquiring what Ballantyne's plans were, he found some excuse for not visiting a patient whom he had intended to see after dinner.

Perry's life became a hell. He could not eat, he dared not sleep. He rarely visited two patients without dashing home between the visits. Even when he was tired and sleepy, he forced himself to keep awake. He must stand guard over his wife's honor. His wife in the next room always slept well: she knew he was on guard over her honor, and she was at peace. Ballantyne slept at a discreet distance from the bridal chamber, soundly like the joyous soul he was, and he seemed to know nothing of Perry's unceasing vigil.

Week after week went by, and Perry was on the verge of a collapse. But he had not the courage to send Ballantyne

away. What could he say? It would be an aspersion on his wife's honor and on Ballantyne's, and he had not a single sound reason to give for suspecting them. He was merely an insanely jealous man. So he said to himself—but the truth was that he feared Ballantyne's and the world's laughter. And he went on suffering.

But even a persistent nature like his, animated by a noble sentiment, cannot endure for ever. The few hours he snatched for sleep when he knew exactly where Mrs. Perry was, and that Ballantyne was at the Law Courts, were not enough to support him. He announced that he would retire from practice, and go to live on the continent for a few years, in the south of France.

"Gad!" said Ballantyne at the table when he heard that. "That's the very thing to do. What's the use of wasting time money-grubbing when a fellow has a decent bit put by. My old uncle has left me pretty snug. Let's all go."

Mrs. Perry expressed her enthusiasm for the plan, and Perry groaned inwardly. The next day he announced that, after all, he did not think a man of his age should desert his profession.

And then one night, Perry slept profoundly. The sentinel was asleep at his post—who could blame him after these many nights?

5

Perry came to breakfast the next morning more refreshed than he had been for many months. He had bathed and dressed mechanically: one could always set one's watch by his movements. It was not until Ballantyne greeted him cheerily with: "Hello, old man, you're looking top-hole this morning"—that Perry realized that he had slept.

A feeling of compunction swept through him. When his wife came down he looked at her from under his eyelids as he saluted her. He left his breakfast almost untasted, and his paper unread. As he looked at Ballantyne, the man became insufferable to him: and yet he could not speak, he could not send him away.

In his office the tension became intolerable. He ordered his automobile for a drive in the park, and told his maid to telephone the hospital that he would be unable to come. In the park he at last summoned up courage, but not to face Ballantyne. He would send him a note to the Law Courts.

When he reached home, he wrote the note, and despatched it at once. It managed to hint that people were saying things, and that, while he, himself, had every confidence in his wife and in Ballantyne, it might be wiser if—and so on. After the note was sent, he looked at himself in the glass and saw that he was perspiring freely. He was perspiring through fear of what Ballantyne would say: he hoped that perhaps Ballantyne would not come home to dinner that day.

Ballantyne smiled when he got the note at the Law Courts. So this was the end of their long comradeship. Comradeship—well, it was hardly that. He could not find a word to express what it was. He had always felt a sort of contempt for Perry.

He wrote a little note in reply, recognizing Perry's point of view, and asking the latter to have a bag packed for him and sent to the Ritz. He would arrange, he said, to take his other things as soon as he could find permanent quarters.

Perry had an immense feeling of relief when he got this letter. How easy it was, after all, to get rid of Ballantyne—of course he could have done it any time if he had wished! Perry grew nearer to a feeling of intoxication than he had ever been in his life before, and he rushed upstairs to kiss his wife. When Mrs. Perry heard the news, thus diplomatically prefaced, she said nothing: which, in the circumstances, was the most eloquent thing she could say. Perry was very glad to interpret it as indifference to Ballantyne. He was happy that his long vigils had not been in vain.

6

Perry's health returned. He read the paper through twice a day at meals as

he used to do before the days of his troubles: Mrs. Perry sat opposite him, and wondered when he would finish. Ballantyne's old room was turned into an oratory—Perry being a pronounced high churchman. The stream of their married life ran smoothly: there was not even a ripple of laughter on its surface.

Ballantyne came to the house for dinner occasionally, and Perry noted that Mrs. Perry paid him little attention. He was, himself, most affable to his old friend, pitying him, rather, as the husband of two rich widows in succession might be expected to pity an old bachelor with nobody to love him. Of course, Ballantyne had been a bit wild, Perry would admit, but as he did so he would smile knowingly as much as to say: "Who hasn't been a bit wild in his day, but we others, we knew how to conceal it—eh, old top?" And the crony to whom he thus talked would nudge him with that nudge which is the average Britisher's honest tribute to the Rokeby Venus.

These dinners passed off very successfully, but what pleased Perry most about them was the fact that Mrs. Perry took such little notice of Ballantyne. Ballantyne enjoyed them, too. He did not seem to resent Mrs. Perry's indifference to him, which was strange as it was some months since he had been last adventuring among Moorish princesses at the Alhambra. Mrs. Perry also was happy at her dinners, although not quite so happy as at her discreet little luncheons with Ballantyne.

Everything might have ended happily but for the Duchess of Fuddlington. Perry would have received the knighthood, perhaps even the baronetcy, due such a distinguished surgeon, and Ballantyne would have continued to be snubbed by Lady Perry. But the Duchess, having buried three husbands and founded a Magdalen Asylum, was accepted as an authority on the morals of London, and what she said concerning them was law to her associates. Her acquaintance with Perry began

through a sprained ankle, a portion of her anatomy which even at the age of seventy she could not expose to that model surgeon without blushing. While the cure was being effected, the Duchess discovered Perry's religious inclinations—he told her about the oratory which had been Ballantyne's bedroom. They spoke sympathetically concerning the exorcism of evil spirits. Of course, it was not quite gentlemanly of Perry to mention the Ballantyne affair, but one does not get the sympathetic ear of a duchess every day.

As a result the Duchess became interested in Mrs. Perry. She even asked her to dine. Unfortunately for herself, Mrs. Perry consented. The Duchess thereafter always kept one eye on the conduct of the Perrys: the other eye was on her Magdalen Asylum. Her gardener looked after the graves of her three husbands.

The Duchess discovered Mrs. Perry's little luncheons with Ballantyne, and, I grieve to say, her belief in the exorcism of evil spirits was not strong enough to allay her natural suspicion. She sent for Perry and informed him.

8

Perry took the usual steps to protect his wife's honor: he employed detectives. The Duchess insisted on that, and on his bringing their reports to her. She found them unexpectedly dull, but she read them faithfully like the lady who read the *Inferno* to the last word under the impression that Boccaccio had written it. There was report after report of luncheons with Ballantyne, but a British jury, with a solid respect for good food, would hardly blame Mrs. Perry for that. More than that the detectives seemed unable to learn. Their stories lacked a succulent climax.

9

Ballantyne found this espionage very annoying. As a man of the world, and knowing Perry very well, he had long ago taken precautions against such an emergency. But he had hoped not to disturb Perry's calm again, now that his health was so happily restored.

His annoyance deepened, and his contempt for Perry was elevated almost into hatred. It was really the first time he had recognized the difference between Perry and some highly useful piece of furniture.

Perry would have contented himself very quickly with what the detectives reported—he was naturally frugal—and remonstrated with his wife. Or, rather, as quarreling was distasteful to him, he would have seen that her luncheon hours were fully occupied. That would be easier, at least, than his nightly vigils when Ballantyne lived with them. But the Duchess commanded Perry. She was determined not to brook the slightest trifling with the moral code. Perry knew that his chances of a knighthood could be made or marred by the influential lady, and he kept up his fight on behalf of public morality—at considerable expense.

At last Perry spoke to his wife. She promised not to lunch with Ballantyne again. Ballantyne, whom Perry had continued to invite to the house for strategical reasons, ceased to come there. Perry gave up paying detectives, and doubled his subscription to his church as a thanksgiving. Soon afterwards the Perrys went to Mentone for two months—Perry's health demanded it.

One morning in the late spring an automobile dashed up to Perry's door, and Ballantyne jumped out. He asked to see Perry at once, muttering something about an urgent case. In a few minutes he was ushered into Perry's study.

"I've come to ask a favor, Perry. It isn't easy in the circumstances—but you are the only surgeon I know. It's a lady—she has hurt herself at my apartment—you understand."

Perry nodded. There was something very pleasant in seeing Ballantyne in a fix, in having him come for help in this way. He was quite cool, accepting the situation not only with the suavity of a medical man, but with the lack of surprise which characterizes the man of the world.

"What is the nature of the accident?" he asked.

"A dislocation of her elbow or her arm—I'm not quite sure. She's in great pain." Ballantyne was obviously in a state of extreme excitement.

Perry prepared to accompany him, but Ballantyne put his hands on the surgeon's shoulders, looking him straight in the eyes.

"One moment, old man," he said. "I want you not to be angry if you can't see the face of the lady. It's her wish—I know I can trust you—but as a man of the world you know the situation is a little, well, a little delicate."

Perry again nodded. "My business is with her arm. I presume she has not dislocated her face also."

It was Perry's first attempt at a joke, and Ballantyne smiled as if the wit were too much for even his desperate state. Perry felt more than ever a man of the world. He offered Ballantyne a cigar to smoke on their way.

As the car hurried along Perry felt a great sense of relief. As long as Ballantyne was meddling with other women in this way, Mrs. Perry's honor was safe.

11

Ballantyne never did things by halves when he did them at all. When Perry arrived at his flat he found that a nurse was already there and doing her utmost to soothe the injured lady. The lady herself was lying on a couch, covered from head to foot with a pale blue silk kimono, save for her left arm which was bared ready for Perry's ministrations. It was part of the compact that there should be no speech, and Perry, having removed his coat, at once went to the side of the couch. The injured arm was not altogether bare—the lady was wearing some garment of pink silk which covered it down to the elbow.

Perry pushed back the pink sleeve gently. Ballantyne stood beside him solicitously. Then, with a gasp of horror, forgetting his professional manner, Perry dropped the delicate arm. For a moment his hands twitched nerv-

ously—did he hear a fiendish chuckle from Ballantyne? Then he made a wild grab at the pale blue kimono. He had seen the little birth-mark, a finger's breadth above the vaccination marks, and it was like—it was the very spit—it was in truth his—

But Ballantyne was too quick for him. Ballantyne was tall and handsome: Perry was small and commonplace.

"My wife, you scoundrel," he shouted, struggling vainly.

Ballantyne chuckled. "Your professional honor," he said. "You promised not to say a word," and he pushed Perry through the door, closing it behind him.

Perry, impotent there, took a sudden resolution. Without hat or coat he dashed down to the door, hailed a passing taxi, and told the driver to break the speed laws.

When he reached home, he rushed into his study, and went to the cabinet where he kept a six-chambered revolver unloaded. As he searched for bullets to charge it, the door opened, and his wife came in, wearing a lovely heliotrope morning gown.

Perry dropped the revolver, overwhelmed. He looked at his wife, incredulous, dumfounded. Then he rushed over to her, fell on his knees and kissed her hand convulsively.

"Forgive me, forgive me," he cried,

but he would not say why he begged forgiveness.

In vain the Duchess, upon whom he called a few days afterwards, tried to show him his duty. Perry was convinced that his wife's honor was secure. The Duchess, in disgust, turned her two eyes on her Magdalen Asylum.

12

Five years, almost to a day, after that eventful happening, Mrs. Perry died of pneumonia. She was grateful for those five years of blissful married life, and in her will she left a few intimate tokens of her esteem to Mr. Perry. Her property she left to Ballantyne.

And Ballantyne made it his business, when all the legal formalities were completed, to send a diamond pendant to a little chorus lady, now rapidly becoming a famous dancer, whose terpsichorean ability largely depended on her facility for dislocating her joints, and who, on a certain rare occasion, had used this talent off the stage for his delight. He also made a liberal donation to the Duchess's Magdalen Asylum.

Perry had two great moments to remember, and although he had not actually loaded the revolver, he came in time to believe that he had done so. The incident remained vividly in his mind, in company with the recollection of that peril he had escaped in the Euston Road.



SAY what you will against the morality of anonymous letters, at all events no one ever seriously doubts them.



THE sort of man a woman remembers longest is the sort that it would be better not to remember at all.



YOU have made your bed: if you don't want to lie in it, lie out of it!

THE WIT OF A WOMAN

By William A. McGarry

"I TELL you she's as fond of you as ever," said Lattimer. "There is absolutely no foundation to the rumor that she is planning a divorce. It's all rot, and if I were you I'd take steps to stop it before it goes any further."

Noell grunted skeptically. "How do you know?" he challenged.

The other man shrugged his shoulders. "I know," he said, "Never mind how."

"You're wrong, Billy," Noell's voice was low and strained. "It is not all idle gossip. There may not be anyone else, but I no longer mean anything to her. Sometimes I don't see her for weeks. To-day I offered her my hand and she ignored it. It's good of you, old pal—"

"Cut that." Lattimer turned suddenly away from him. "I've lost the right to that title, Dick," he said. "That's how I know what she thinks of you. It isn't a pleasant story, but I'm going to tell it."

Noell sat up very straight and looked at him curiously, but said nothing.

"You know why I went West," began Lattimer, "Of course, I was short of money, but I'd have stayed here to earn more if there had been a chance with her. Why, I've lived the life of a hermit, but I'd given up all that life held out for me and I didn't care. If I hadn't succeeded out there this never might have happened, but I made money. Then you insisted that I come to see you. I heard the idle gossip and you know what happened. The first man who spoke of her to me apologized. After that no one said a word you or any other could resent, but I could read

between the lines. For a long time I refused to believe, but eventually I began to wonder, and when I had convinced myself that she would be glad to be free of you the old flame returned. Dick, I have been making love to your wife. That's why I went to a hotel. I couldn't stay in your house under the circumstances, but I made love to her with all the persuasion at my command."

He dropped into a chair and settled his head in his hands.

"Go on," said Noell, quietly.

"There isn't much more to tell. She was insulted. For a time after I left she would never permit herself to be alone with me. I persevered, and after a time she took me into her confidence and swore she still loved you."

"I'd like to think so," said Noell, wearily, "but the evidence is too strong. It is all over."

"Now listen, Dick," said Lattimer, "I've tried my best to get her, and I've failed. If I can't have her the least I can do is to help patch up this silly misunderstanding before it gets to be serious. She loves you, and I'll prove it. At seven to-night she's to see me to say good-bye. It was my intention to make a final plea, but I knew it to be hopeless. I'll make it, anyhow. You stand where you can hear what's said, and you'll be convinced."

"If what I fear is true," said Noell, bitterly, "It would serve me right if I engage in any such scheme."

"Quite true—but you will not listen to reason. Therefore I tell you to come to-night and see for yourself. I'm going now to pack."

Noell crossed the room to a desk,

unlocked the drawer and drew out a revolver. "I'll be there," he muttered, as Lattimer turned to go.

Lattimer's glance roved idly about the room as he waited for her. Presently they rested on a set of heavy curtains over a window niche. Noell was behind them, he thought. A flush passed over his bronzed features. It was not a game he liked, but he felt that he owed it to his friend as reparation for the injury he had tried to do.

She came in quietly. Dressed in a soft white material that clung to her finely molded figure, her golden bronze hair piled high on her head, her cheeks radiant, she looked more wonderfully beautiful to Lattimer than ever before. Hope was born again of passion. He made up his mind he would leave nothing unsaid in his fight to win her, he would forget her husband stood a few feet away, a revolver in his hand. The revolver had little terror for Lattimer. He also was armed.

"So you're going away," she said.

"To-night."

"I shall be sorry."

"Why?" He caught her hand. "You know why I am going; why make it necessary? I do not have to go now—I can wait until you are free."

"No, not that," she stepped back, but something in her voice impelled him to pursue her.

"You do not love your husband," he cried, "why should you continue this farcical relation to him? You are his wife in name only, Marion. Why not a quiet divorce and then let me try to make you happy?"

"You grow sentimental," said the woman, bitterly, "but you are right. I no longer love Billy, and I suppose it is just as well we should part once and for all. As for you—"

Lattimer approached her eagerly, arms outstretched. He had forgotten about the curtains. "I love you more," he began, but she interrupted him.

"Than life itself, of course," she said, the shadow of a sneer on her face, "Else why should you risk your life to woo me? But that is aside from the

point. I shall divorce Billy because he does not love me and I do not love him—and for other reasons. I shall probably marry you because I am a creature of circumstances. I could not support myself if I had the inclination, therefore I must marry again."

Lattimer had turned suddenly toward the window as she spoke of his risk. His brow was beaded with perspiration. At any moment he expected Noell to step from behind the curtains and demand a settlement, but nothing happened. Things had taken an unexpected turn. He had never dreamed she would act as she did. He turned back to the woman when she resumed speaking.

"What will Billy say when my lawyer serves him with papers in a divorce suit, for I shall not tell him myself. I shall leave the house quietly and he will know nothing of it. He will be paid for his indifference."

Lattimer nodded, and turned to the window again. It was one thing to face death that can be seen and another to stand calmly and wait for it to strike. He dropped his right hand into his coat pocket. Mrs. Noell again broke in on his thoughts.

"I'll get a divorce," she said, distinctly, "and then, perhaps, I'll marry you."

Lattimer faced the curtains again. The suspense was telling on him and the revolver was now in his hand. He and the woman stood a moment in tense silence, then she stepped across the room and threw aside the curtains.

There was no one in the window niche.

Rapidly she walked to another window, looked behind and under tables, into corners and all about the room. Then she returned and confronted Lattimer, but when she spoke her voice was vibrant with joy and she seemed almost to have forgotten his presence.

"You see," she said, "he is not here. He trusted me; he knew without your telling that I loved him. I overheard your conversation to-day and I made up my mind if he consented to become

a party to what you proposed I was through with him. I didn't know; I thought he might be here, so I said what I did, but you must have known. I can understand his attitude now. It is the gossips. He did not want to believe, but they made him.

Lattimer flattered himself that he was a good sport. He made his adieu with a smile on his lips. After he had gone the woman sent for a servant.

"Tell Mr. Noell when he returns he is to come at once to my room," she said. "I must see him."

The lights in the library were extinguished, all but a single electric over

the table. The household became silent. Eleven o'clock sounded from a big clock in the hall. Another interval of silence, then quietly the door of a great old-fashioned bookcase opened and from it stepped the figure of a man. Evading the light, he circled the room on tiptoe, reached the hall and got his hat and coat. Then he slipped out into the night, walked rapidly around the block and, returning, let himself into the house with a latch key, making a great show of noise.

"It was a close shave," said Noell to himself as the servant came up and delivered his message.



THE DANCER

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

I DANCE to forget life!
For I have had enough of love and roses.
And I would feel the blood riot in my veins
Warm as a Summer wind!

Bring the music!
Let us dance till our dreams lie dead
And the haggard dawn shivers
On the shining floor!

Let there be wild song
And false mirth to fill the heavy air.
As careless boys in carnival
Let us be glad!

Let me be full of rhythm
Until I am drunk unto forgetting.
Unfurl the pageant of color
That I may drown therein. . .

I dance to forget life. . .
For I have had enough of love and roses
And in a blind reel
I would take Death by the hand. . .

THE STATUES IN THE STATION

I ASKED a man who works day after day in the Washington Station if he could tell me anything about the statues around the galleries. He looked up at the row in the gallery opposite him, he glanced at the row on each side, then he turned around to see if there were any back of him.

"Why, they're just ordinary statues," he said. "Maybe I did hear someone say they were going to put up some Roman soldiers somewhere hereabouts; those might be the fellows."

But the statues are not ordinary. When daylight has gone, and the great waiting-room is flooded with a reflected light, then I love the statues most. Then, the spirits of the dead Roman soldiers steal back across the centuries and creep silently into their spectral forms. Staunchly, as long ago they stood for old Rome, they stand now

guarding the entrance to our young republic. Aloof they are above the crowd. They have seen an empire fall; they know.

Below the benches are filled with tired, impatient men and women and children. A constant, muffled shuffling of feet sounds through the long waiting-room. People rush to the restaurant, hungry and greedy.

"All aboard," the call echoes and re-echoes through the station and dies away. "All aboard," the crowds push and hurry, the gates slam, the trains puff and whistle and pull out for their long journeys. The statues are silent. They, too, are waiting; calmly, wisely waiting. A president of the United States passes out beneath them, a new president hurries in, but their eyes are ever forward.

What are they waiting for?



HAVENS

By Louis Untermeyer

BELOVED, let me grope and lie
In the triumphant reaches of your soul;
That singing and barbaric sky
Which is my goal.

Yet may I keep the way still fresh;
And bar me if I ever dare despise
The close and friendly house of flesh
Through which it lies.

And ever slowly let me move
Through twisting roads of passion, gates of care;
And the dark labyrinth of love
That leads me there.

THE SALE OF A FACE

By Gertrude Macaulay

I HAVE read somewhere that every story should have a theme, an emotional motive; one might—if one inclines to such language—almost say a soul.

Well, the soul of my story can find its full expression in five words.

I am an ugly woman.

But the padding, the physical form or body in which that soul lives, is a longer tale.

Mine is not the plainness which is distinctive, aristocratic, fantastic, artistic, capable of esthetic interpretation or accentuation, the ugliness which has its own possibilities. No, my father looked like a gorilla, and even he resented it when people remarked his prepotency in me.

As a child I knew it. My mother used to shake her head sadly as polite guests would encourage her with "She may improve as she grows up."

I did not improve. I intensified. And yet, I am slim, with small hands and feet. In the streets men have followed me, three steps or a mile, according to the distance it took them to catch a glimpse of my face. And then they start. Their expression is always the same—surprise, followed by a sort of stung look, then a hasty retreat to cover laughter.

All but one! He was different.

It was a glorious April day. A desire to mingle with my kind, to plunge into an atmosphere of pleasure, was on me. I persuaded a girl friend to come out with me. She was pretty, and as we strolled down Fifth Avenue many eyes followed us.

She suggested Reisenweber's for tea.

We got a table near the dancing, and sipped tea and watched.

Young women of varying castes and degrees of rectitude swayed and coquetted and were happy. Life held nothing like that for me. Resentfully I watched, glaring bitterly at the closest dancers and the most subdued *tête-à-tête* tables.

And then my eyes rested on Him. Two tables distant he was. Tall, heavy, of monstrous girth and bull-neck, with a nose so huge and gnarled that it seemed a veritable artichoke, he leered with pulging, boiled-egg eyes and many creasing chins at the slim, immaculate, painted, hard, little lady by his side.

Very brilliantly she returned his smile, and inclining her head toward the music, asked with her eyes whether they should not join the dancers.

Heavily, amorously, he rose, and extended his arms to her, the lights sparkling from his diamond rings, his diamond cuff-links, his diamond tie-pin. Skittishly she sidled up to his huge bulk, and they began to dance.

In them New York café life satirized itself. They swayed, pranced sideways and to and fro, hopped, jerked, convoluted in the latest whim of the trot. And he was 350 pounds of monstrous, bull-necked, bediamonded masculinity, and she, 120 pounds of immaculate, painted, smiling calculation. Her clothes were very new, but her tricks very old.

The music stopped. They returned to their seats.

The girl with me shuddered. "Isn't he hideous?"

But I did not shudder. Had he been

a woman, I could have pressed his hand. Yet in pity I was glad he was a man. As long as his money held out he would not feel his handicap.

Perhaps he sensed my interest, for he turned quickly toward me, and when he saw my face, of course, like the rest, he tried to conceal a start. But, herein he differed, he did not turn away to laugh with his companion, he continued to stare at me.

The girl with me laughed.

"Is he a relative of yours?" she asked.

"No, merely an admirer," I retorted.

And still he stared, with a sort of wonder and delight in his eyes. The hard, smiling girl with him noticed his abstraction, followed his gaze piquedly, saw me, and laughed. She made some remark to him. He replied under his breath something which made her pout.

All the next ten minutes his eyes kept coming back to me fascinatedly. And there was no humour or contempt in his glance. My heart thumped. He, too, had suffered.

But when he whispered something to the girl at his side, rose cumbrously, and made his way to our table, a sort of delirious terror paralyzed me.

He bowed clumsily and asked me to dance. Sudden reckless independence flooded me. Ignoring my friend's horrified glare, I accepted his suggestion.

It was once in my life. Why not?

While we danced, I felt his eyes devouring my face. Childishly I hoped he would feel that my hand was soft and small, my body slender, pliant.

But he saw, felt, knew nothing save my face.

"Gad! It's luck I saw you," he muttered.

My head whirled.

"Why?" I queried weakly.

He stared at my face.

"I'll tell you why later."

We danced in silence.

When we returned to my table my friend was gone. I was not surprised. I did not care how many of my friends she persuaded to cut me. I was a woman for once.

"Friend gone, eh?" he murmured thickly. "Mind if I stay with you and take you home?"

I had never been so happy in my life.

He ordered more tea for me and whiskey for himself. And his eyes never left my face. Could it be that among all the millions in the world, beauty being in the eye of the beholder, there was one to whom I was not repulsive? And I had found him! That was the wonderful part.

He was not talkative, but thickly he drew me out about my people and home. I was quite frank, and he seemed glad to hear that I was an orphan. When I also mentioned that my small inheritance sufficed only to keep me modestly clad and in a tiny apartment shared with another girl, he in no way swerved. A horror had come on me, that for some inexplicable reason he might have assumed I was prosperous and seem an heiress to be won sans competition.

But he seemed pleased at my modest circumstances.

"You wouldn't mind having a bit more, would you?" he asked pleasantly.

I shook my head bewilderedly. I hoped he meant honourably, but was grateful, whatever his meaning.

Still he stared. Then he said slowly:

"Gad, girl, you're a wonder. You shall have laces, frills, furs, anything you want."

I gasped. "What do you mean?"

"Why, your face, girl! Your face is your fortune."

I felt my card castle falling. He was like the others after all. He *must* be laughing at me. Sudden furious resentment gave me strength to turn glaringly upon him.

"And what of your own?" I snapped out. "Do you consider yourself an Apollo?"

At that he laughed uncontrollably.

"Ha! Ha! That's good! But it don't help a man to be hideous."

Black specks whirled before me.

Hideous! I laughed. My one admirer! That was what I was to him. *Hideous!*

I know when I'm beaten. Calmly, despite the hatred and fury in my heart, I rose, and walked out into the streets.

But he followed me, slowly because of his bulk and paying the waiter. In the streets he overtook me. He touched my arm, and raised his hat.

"I'm sorry," he said awkwardly.

I longed to murder him. "Why did you ask me to dance?"

"If you will let me, I will tell you."

And as we walked leisurely along, he told me what has since completed my nightmare of a life.

He gave me his card. He was Moses Myers, theatrical producer. He desired my face for humorous parts of hideous females. If I developed any talent at farce at all, he would take me. My salary would be liberal, increasing if I got a big laugh. I could complete my face by wearing caricature costumes, monstrous boots and gloves, and eccentric hairdressing.

He grew enthusiastic.

"Why, with black over a couple of your teeth, and comedy make-up—Gad, I can see you!" he burst into huge guffaws. "We would cast you as some lovesick old maid. Girl, you'll be a hit. You won't need to act. They'll double up the moment they see your face."

And that is how I became what I am. If I told you my name, you would remember laughing at me.

I, too, have laces and diamonds and furs. I, too, smile every night as I bow to applause. But there is no gratitude in my heart.

Did anyone else ever hate as I do, when some unusually loud guffaw greets my entrance.

But I smirk, and gain another laugh by turning my profile.

Even the chorus girls titter, and give me no credit for my virtue.



LOVE-SONG TO EUNOE

By Ezra Pound

BE wise:

Give me to the world,
Send me to seek adventure.

I have seen the married,
I have seen the respectably married
Sitting at their hearths:
It is very disgusting.

I have seen them stodged and swathed in contentments.
They purr with their thick stupidities.

O Love, Love,
Your eyes are too beautiful for such enactment!
Let us contrive a better fashion.

O Love, your face is too perfect,
Too capable of bearing inspection;
O Love,
Launch out your ships,
Give me once more to the tempest.

IN PASSING

By Selma Van Praag

THE scientist and the artist met the woman and they spoke. At first playfully, then thoughtfully and then sadly. And then the woman thought, "My lunch hour is really over," and she went.

Said the scientist, "Do you know, if I were a man and not a burrowing mole existing on a pittance, I could love that woman."

Said the artist, "If I were a human being and not the agent of a force more

powerful than I, which must find expression, the while I am supported by charity, I would know that I have loved her for years." And each one went on his way.

The woman thought, "How pleasant it would be to be loved by either of these men. How lucky are some women. But then I suppose I have not their power of arousing love."

And then she started her work of the afternoon.



THE OLD MOTHER

By Cora A. Matson Dolson

"LEAVE me alone,"
Said she;

"Let me stay in the place
Where my strength was spent,
Where I set the tree,
Where I gathered the fruit.

"I have my blue cup
And my pot of tea;
I know the noonmark on the floor;
I can walk in the dark anywhere
And feel no fear,
Though I am alone.

"On your velvet rugs
And your polished floors
My weak feet would stumble.

"And what, you ask,
If I die alone?
Then from the home that I love
I will go to my Redeemer."

SAVED!

A GRAND GUIGNOL THRILLER

By Percival L. Wilde

FROM THE FRENCH OF ANDRÉ DE LORDE AND EUGÈNE MOREL

CHARACTERS

D'HEMELIN (*Consul*)
GRAVIER (*in command of troops*)
BERNARD (*interpreter*)
MORIN (*Corporal of Marines, detailed
to the Consulate*)

LOREAU
KERDREC
BORNIN
CLEMENT

(*Marines detailed to the
Consulate*)

DENISE D'HEMELIN (*daughter of the
Consul*)

A WOMAN

THE PLACE—China, at the time of the Boxer uprising. THE TIME—July, 1900.

THE SCENE—The grounds of the French Consulate, in which the besieged Frenchmen have barricaded themselves. At the left, the exterior of the Consulate, a brick house built in the Chinese fashion (bricks laid in stepped tiers), with a staircase of six steps flanked by two enormous porcelain monsters. It is a one-story house. Pillars of wood, colored red, run up to a roof of glazed tiles. At the right, and at back, a barricade made up of bags of earth, overturned carts, and rubbish of all kinds. Near the center, the barricade is cut by the end of an arched Chinese bridge, ornamented with monsters, and accessible by means of steps. The bridge crosses an invisible canal. The background shows the Chinese country: an immense flat plain, dotted with fields of sorghum. In the extreme distance the City, a squat rectangle of serrated red ramparts, with a high gate and fortified towers.

The curtain rises. It is night. There are glimmers of fire from the distant city. Two men, GRAVIER and BERNARD, mount guard near the bridge. Others, MORIN, LOREAU, KERDREC, and CLEMENT, are sleeping on the ground, their bayonnetted rifles at their sides.

A long pause. A continuous sound of cannon fire in the distance.

GRAVIER (*in a low voice, to BERNARD*):

Look! How it's burning . . .!

BERNARD:

The whole Chinese section is on fire.
(*Pause.*)

GRAVIER (*listening*):

Cannon—like last night.

BERNARD:

There must be fighting—out there.
Near the pagodas . . .

(*Pause. Suddenly BERNARD notices the horizon, where new flames are visible.*)

BERNARD:

Good God!

GRAVIER:

What is it?

BERNARD:

They have set the customs houses on fire!

GRAVIER (*grimly*):

Yes . . . The rebellion is making headway.

(*A pause.*)

BERNARD:

We're done for.

GRAVIER:

Not yet. If the troops can drive the Boxers out of the Violet City there will be hope for us. We will gain time . . . and the Allies will have a chance to land.

BERNARD:

We have been waiting for that for thirty-two days.

GRAVIER:

Perhaps the Allies have landed already. They may be bombarding the Yellow City now. We don't know what's happening.

BERNARD:

What's happening? The Powers are sending dispatches to each other! Diplomatic notes! oh, they're very important! . . . Ah, well, it gives us time to die.

GRAVIER:

But if the regulars . . .

BERNARD:

What regulars!

GRAVIER:

The Imperial Chinese Army! The Boxers are rebels!

BERNARD (*sarcastically*):

Yes? The regulars and the Boxers get along beautifully!

GRAVIER:

In the meantime, we must wait . . .

BERNARD (*interrupting*):

Wait? We ought to escape! (*An ironic gesture from GRAVIER.*) Yes, escape! Cross the canal, like the others . . . Not shut ourselves up in the Consulate "under the protection of the French flag" . . .! Agh! It's a wonderful protection! . . . It's not too late to escape now . . .

GRAVIER:

Escape? Now? You think you could get away?

BERNARD:

How about Bornin? And Carel? All of those who *did* get away?

GRAVIER:

Where are they now?

BERNARD:

Safe, perhaps! If they found a junk on the river they could have reached Tien-Tsin. And there, in the French concessions, they're all together—and they have arms, and food . . .

GRAVIER:

They would have come back to help us.

BERNARD:

Come back? Perhaps! But I'm not counting on them any longer . . . Oh, what I would give to hear the charge! The charge, blown on French bugles!

(*He hums the charge, keeping time with the butt of his rifle.*)

GRAVIER:

Hush! (*Indicating sleepers.*) Don't

wake them up. They have a right to a little sleep . . .

(*The door of the Consulate opens, and a brightly lit room is visible for an instant. D'HEMELIN appears on the threshold, a lantern in his hand. He closes the door, and comes down slowly, stepping carefully over the sleeping men.*)

D'HEMELIN:
Sentry!

GRAVIER:
Present!

D'HEMELIN:
Oh, it's you, George. Anything new?

GRAVIER:
Nothing. (*Indicating the city.*) Fire, out there.

D'HEMELIN:
I saw it . . . Who goes there?
Oh, Bernard?

BERNARD:
Yes, Consul.

D'HEMELIN:
Nothing new with you either?

BERNARD:
Towards midnight I thought I heard something down there, in the shrubbery. I ran to the canal.

D'HEMELIN:
Well?

BERNARD:
I couldn't see anything: the shrubbery is too high. I must have made a mistake. If you listen, you think you hear all kinds of things . . .

GRAVIER (*interrupting*):
We won't be attacked during the night: the Boxers are afraid of ghosts. (*At this point long wails are heard from the Consulate.*)

BERNARD:
Ah! those screams! The women shut up in there . . .

GRAVIER:
I could hear them sobbing all night long.

D'HEMELIN:
They're exciting themselves, and they are exciting us. What can I do about it?

(*Wails louder.*)

GRAVIER:
Shall I see?

D'HEMELIN:
Oh, what's the good? (*The wailing stops. There is a pause.*) They are quieter now.

(*BERNARD goes off over the bridge.*)

D'HEMELIN:
Everything is quiet.

GRAVIER (*after a pause*):
How is Denise?

(*D'HEMELIN shakes his head sadly.*)

GRAVIER:
Is she still sick?

D'HEMELIN:
I sat next to her all night long. She was feverish, and she was a little delirious. She kept calling me "Daddy, dear!" She threw her arms around my neck . . . she said, "They want to take me! Save me! Save me!" She dropped off to sleep a little while ago. I never saw her so weak.

GRAVIER:
She was doing better lately . . .

D'HEMELIN:
She was doing better.

GRAVIER:
But now! With all these hardships! She must be hungry.

D'HEMELIN:
I have to economize the food.

GRAVIER:
But ours—you could take our rations. We are strong.

D'HEMELIN:
You have to fight: the fighters come first! (*Pause.*) Do you know, we should have been back in France by this time? I wanted to return. I had

asked to be relieved . . . After the death of her mother, she wasted away so . . . I knew it would finish her too, if I didn't get her home soon: the climate was killing her—as it killed my wife. She actually felt better when we had settled the date of our departure! Back home, with a gentler sky, and a better climate—I would have cured her! I would have cured her!—And now I am powerless to prevent still another death!

GRAVIER:
Consul!

D'HEMELIN (*controlling himself*):
You are right! I must set an example. I am the chief. I must dominate: I must encourage everybody!

GRAVIER:
You must hope! Hope! That is the duty of the commander!

D'HEMELIN:
Oh, that is very easy! If only I had no other duty!

GRAVIER:
What do you mean?

D'HEMELIN:
There is another . . . a terrible duty. I am afraid to think of it. And the time is coming near—the time when I will have to— (*He breaks off.*) George, my friend, if all were lost . . . (*A pause.*)

GRAVIER:
Well?

D'HEMELIN (*not daring to go on*):
Later! Later!

BERNARD (*dashing back over the bridge*):
Consul!

D'HEMELIN:
What is it?

BERNARD (*indicating the horizon, which is growing redder*):

Over towards the East! The Austrian Embassy is on fire! The fire is reaching the Red Gate!

D'HEMELIN:
So that's what they're getting ready for us!

GRAVIER (*overwhelmed*):
The Legations on fire!

D'HEMELIN:
It will be our turn soon enough!
(*A pause. Cannon in the distance.*)

BERNARD:
Well, what are we waiting here for? Why don't we try to escape?

D'HEMELIN:
It's what they're all thinking of. Escape? If it were possible, do you think I'd stay here? With my daughter? But there is a circle of death around us! Escape? The Boxers are everywhere! And the people are with them! There is not a village, not a house, which doesn't shelter an enemy . . . (*Talking, he stumbles over a sleeper.*)

MORIN (*waking with a start*):
Eh? Who goes there?

D'HEMELIN:
Never mind. I didn't mean to disturb you.

MORIN:
Oh, the Consul? I was afraid—I thought—

D'HEMELIN:
It's all right. Go to sleep again. Sleep.

MORIN:
Oh, yes! Sleep . . . that is good . . . to sleep . . . I was just in the middle of a wonderful dream. I don't know if I'll dream it again. Back home . . . in the country . . . I dreamt it was harvest time . . . we were gathering the harvest . . . Oh, a wonderful dream! . . .

(*He sleeps.*)

BERNARD:
The country! Will we ever see it again?

D'HEMELIN (*with a vague gesture towards the sleeping man*):
Let them hope—until the last minute.

GRAVIER:
The last minute? That is not far away.

(The door of the Consulate opens. DENISE appears, frantic, comes down stairs.)

DENISE:
Father! Father! Come quickly!

D'HEMELIN:
What is it?

(Sobs are heard.)

DENISE:
Quick! It's awful! The poor mother . . .

D'HEMELIN:
What has happened?
Oh, father! The woman from Brittany! Her baby just died. She is going crazy. Just listen! (The sobs grow louder.) It's cold already—and she is trying to nurse it. You must take it away from her. We can't do it.

D'HEMELIN:
The poor creature!
(The sobs change into hysterical laughter. Presently into idiotic singing.)

DENISE:
Listen! . . . She is singing now . . . She has gone mad!

A WOMAN (appearing on the threshold):

We can't hold her any longer, Miss. She wants to come out here!

D'HEMELIN:
Stop her! Stop her! (To DENISE.) Take care of her, dear.

(The WOMAN goes off.)

DENISE:
Yes, father. But . . . (Turns suddenly, exclaims.) Oh, the horizon is red! There's a fire!

D'HEMELIN (gently pushing her towards the house):

No, no, dear! Go in . . .

DENISE:
What is burning? Oh, they have set fire . . .

D'HEMELIN (interrupting):
It is only day breaking.

DENISE:
Day? Oh, no . . . Look! Over there!

GRAVIER (advancing):
It is day indeed! The day of our rescue! They are fighting near the city . . . That is what the light is from . . . They are coming to help us!

DENISE:
Really? Is that true? Father, is it true?

D'HEMELIN (with authority):
Yes . . . yes . . . Rescue. It is probably nothing but a matter of hours . . . Encourage them, dear. (She goes. His face changes as he turns to BERNARD.) Bernard! The body of the child must be taken from the mother, and then . . . bury it, somewhere near . . . it doesn't matter where . . . in the ditch.

BERNARD:
Is there any linen to wrap it in?

D'HEMELIN:
The linen is for the wounded—not for the dead. The child will need no coffin.

BERNARD (hesitating):
But the woman won't allow it! It will be terrible if I have to take the little one from her by force.

D'HEMELIN:
All right, I will go with you. We will try gently—very gently. (To GRAVIER) Look out, will you? Particularly on this side.

(The CONSUL and BERNARD go into the house. The sobs become louder, then stop. GRAVIER listens an instant, then goes off, examining the horizon to the right. Cannon in the distance. Day begins to break. LOREAU, who is sleeping, stretched on the ground, be-

asked to be relieved . . . After the death of her mother, she wasted away so . . . I knew it would finish her too, if I didn't get her home soon: the climate was killing her—as it killed my wife. She actually felt better when we had settled the date of our departure! Back home, with a gentler sky, and a better climate—I would have cured her! I would have cured her!—And now I am powerless to prevent still another death!

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Well, what are we waiting here for? Why don't we try to escape?

D'HEMELIN:
It's what they're all thinking of. Escape? If it were possible, do you think I'd stay here? With my daughter? But there is a circle of death around us! Escape? The Boxers are everywhere! And the people are with them! There is not a village, not a house, which doesn't shelter an enemy . . . (*Talking, he stumbles over a sleeper.*)

MORIN (*waking with a start*):
Eh? Who goes there?

D'HEMELIN:
Never mind. I didn't mean to disturb you.

MORIN:
Oh, the Consul? I was afraid—I thought—

D'HEMELIN:
It's all right. Go to sleep again. Sleep.

MORIN:
Oh, yes! Sleep . . . that is good . . . to sleep . . . I was just in the middle of a wonderful dream. I don't know if I'll dream it again. Back home . . . in the country . . . I dreamt it was harvest time . . . we were gathering the harvest . . . Oh, a wonderful dream! . . . (*He sleeps.*)

BERNARD:
The country! Will we ever see it again?

D'HEMELIN (*with a vague gesture towards the sleeping man*):
Let them hope—until the last minute.

GRAVIER:
The last minute? That is not far away.

(*The door of the Consulate opens. DENISE appears, frantic, comes down stairs.*)

DENISE:
Father! Father! Come quickly!

D'HEMELIN:
What is it?

(*Sobs are heard.*)

DENISE:
Quick! It's awful! The poor mother . . .

D'HEMELIN:
What has happened?

Oh, father! The woman from Brittany! Her baby just died. She is going crazy. Just listen! (*The sobs grow louder.*) It's cold already—and she is trying to nurse it. You must take it away from her. We can't do it.

D'HEMELIN:
The poor creature!
(*The sobs change into hysterical laughter. Presently into idiotic singing.*)

DENISE:
Listen! . . . She is singing now . . . She has gone mad!

A WOMAN (*appearing on the threshold*):

We can't hold her any longer, Miss. She wants to come out here!

D'HEMELIN:
Stop her! Stop her! (*To DENISE.*) Take care of her, dear.

(*The WOMAN goes off.*)

DENISE:
Yes, father. But . . . (*Turns suddenly, exclaims.*) Oh, the horizon is red! There's a fire!

D'HEMELIN (*gently pushing her towards the house*):

No, no, dear! Go in . . .

DENISE:
What is burning? Oh, they have set fire . . .

D'HEMELIN (*interrupting*):
It is only day breaking.

DENISE:
Day? Oh, no . . . Look! Over there!

GRAVIER (*advancing*):
It is day indeed! The day of our rescue! They are fighting near the city . . . That is what the light is from . . . They are coming to help us!

DENISE:
Really? Is that true? Father, is it true?

D'HEMELIN (*with authority*):
Yes . . . yes . . . Rescue. It is probably nothing but a matter of hours . . . Encourage them, dear. (*She goes. His face changes as he turns to BERNARD.*) Bernard! The body of the child must be taken from the mother, and then . . . bury it, somewhere near . . . it doesn't matter where . . . in the ditch.

BERNARD:
Is there any linen to wrap it in?

D'HEMELIN:
The linen is for the wounded—not for the dead. The child will need no coffin.

BERNARD (*hesitating*):
But the woman won't allow it! It will be terrible if I have to take the little one from her by force.

D'HEMELIN:
All right, I will go with you. We will try gently—very gently. (*To GRAVIER*) Look out, will you? Particularly on this side.

(*The CONSUL and BERNARD go into the house. The sobs become louder, then stop. GRAVIER listens an instant, then goes off, examining the horizon to the right. Cannon in the distance. Day begins to break. LOREAU, who is sleeping, stretched on the ground, be-*

gins to move, then leans on his elbow, and puts his ear to the ground.)

LOREAU:

What is that scraping down there? What is that scraping? *(He follows an imaginary path.)* There . . . Here . . . It isn't a dream. I'm not asleep . . . No. I don't hear it now . . . Yes . . . Something is running—and digging . . . under the earth—like a mole. *(Horror-stricken.)* They're digging a mine! They're going to blow us up! *(Shaking CLEMENT.)* Clement! Clement! Wake up! Don't you hear me? Are you asleep?

CLEMENT:

Eh? What? It's you, Loreau?

LOREAU:

Wake up! *(Indicating.)* Listen!

CLEMENT:

What's the matter with you?

LOREAU:

I can't sleep. I seem to hear things . . . I don't think I'm afraid.

CLEMENT:

Bah! You're feverish!

LOREAU:

Yes? Listen.

(Holds CLEMENT's head to the ground.)

CLEMENT:

I hear cannon in the distance.

LOREAU:

But down there! Under the ground!

CLEMENT:

Nothing at all!

LOREAU *(excitedly)*:

But I hear it! I hear it! They're digging a mine! We ought to give the alarm . . . *(A pause.)* I don't hear anything now . . . I'm going insane—I'm going insane! There's no reason for me to be afraid: I can *fight* against 'em well enough. Let them attack! I'm ready . . . ! But at night—when they've gone away—and everything's quiet . . .

CLEMENT:

You're hungry. That's all.

LOREAU:

Yes, perhaps . . . It affects me. Hallucinations—

CLEMENT *(producing a bottle)*:

Here! Try this! This'll fix you up . . . It's the stuff that helps me. We'll divide it.

LOREAU *(drinking)*:

Oh, thanks . . . There! *(Returning bottle.)* Your turn.

CLEMENT *(drinking; emptying the bottle)*:

The last drop! There's something else the Chinamen won't get! My skin! And my bottle!

(Throws the bottle into the distance. It breaks. At the noise, KERDREC jumps up with a cry, seizes his bayoneted rifle, and charges blindly.)

KERDREC:

To arms!

(He wounds CLEMENT's shoulder.)

CLEMENT:

Ah!

(MORIN wakes and rushes at KERDREC. GRAVIER runs on.)

LOREAU *(seizing KERDREC about the body)*:

Look out!

MORIN:

You're crazy! What's the matter with you?

GRAVIER:

What's wrong?

KERDREC *(coming to his senses, recognizing CLEMENT)*:

You! You! What have I done?

LOREAU *(to CLEMENT)*:

You are wounded?

CLEMENT:

No—not at all. More frightened than hurt.

D'HEMELIN *(coming out of the Consulate)*:

What's the matter?

KERDREC (*still confused*):

I don't know. I was dizzy. I thought they were at me—all around me—I heard them shouting— (*Breaking into tears.*) You—it was you—I wounded you!

CLEMENT:

Oh, shut up! It's nothing.

D'HEMELIN:

You are bleeding?

CLEMENT:

A scratch—that's all. I wish I hadn't made so much noise with my bottle.

KERDREC (*much moved*):

I might have killed you . . . I'm nothing but a brute! A brute!

GRAVIER:

All right, Kerdrec.

LOREAU:

It's not your fault.

D'HEMELIN:

Madness! Thirty-two days of siege! Come, come, it's nothing . . . Morin! Take your post.

(MORIN *exits L.*)

KERDREC:

They were all around me! . . . their yellow faces, grinning . . . Their yells! A nightmare!

D'HEMELIN:

We all have our nightmares.

KERDREC:

But if we kill each other, *now* . . .

CLEMENT:

What's the difference! It's bound to come sooner or later: it might as well be that way as any other. I might have to knock you over the head. You wouldn't want them to get you alive?

KERDREC:

And be sliced to pieces? No, thank you.

CLEMENT:

Then be quiet. Perhaps we'll kill each other to-night because we're such good pals.

D'HEMELIN (*who has overheard a*

word or two, stops them brutally):

Stop it! The women might overhear!

CLEMENT (*grumbling*):

Ah, yes. The women.

LOREAU:

It makes a man a coward to have women around him.

KERDREC:

Yes, without them . . .

CLEMENT:

If there were only men we could make a rush . . .

KERDREC:

Reach Tien-Tsin . . .

LOREAU:

Like Bornin, Carel . . .

CLEMENT:

Like Robert, like the others . . .

KERDREC:

They got away!

LOREAU (*furiously*):

As for me, I've had enough of it! We've been in the trenches for thirty-two days! We've been hungry! (*Indicating plain.*) And we've had to listen to them fighting outside! I'd rather fight!

OMNES (*together*):

And I too; . . . By God, yes! . . . Make an end of it! . . . Fight! . . .

D'HEMELIN:

We are all agreed on that, my friends! I too would rather fight! I fought at Gravelotte—years ago—that was a real battle! But it is much harder to-day. We must show another kind of courage. Were it *war* our only thought would be to make them respect the flag of France . . .

LOREAU (*interrupting*):

France? What does France care for us?

D'HEMELIN (*continuing*):

But there are non-combatants: women, children. We must protect them. We have a sacred duty . . .

CLEMENT:

I have a wife and children myself! They need me! I want to return to them!

KERDREC:

Let us make a sortie!

D'HEMELIN:

A sortie? You fools! You would be cut to pieces before you had taken two steps! And if you *did* escape from the Boxers, you'd have no chance! Nothing but devastated fields; a whole nation hostile to you; not a roof, not a cranny, but would shelter an enemy! The wells are poisoned; the rivers are foul with decaying bodies. What would you eat? What would you drink?

KERDREC:

I don't know. I'd just go straight ahead! If I stay here I'll end up by becoming a coward!

CLEMENT:

I'll go crazy and kill myself!

KERDREC:

I don't believe they're trying to rescue us!

LOREAU:

Agh! Nobody believes that!

CLEMENT:

Not even you yourself, Consul!

D'HEMELIN:

I believe—I believe that the seven of us have held hundreds of fanatics at bay for more than a month! They think themselves invulnerable! They have rushed on our bullets with naked breasts! And all their fury has broken itself against us—against the seven of us, because we were united, disciplined, and our number didn't matter! There was in us something even greater than courage!

We were a unit! Go away from here, and we become nothing but men! Seven men against millions! Against a howling mob!

CLEMENT:

But Carel, Bornin . . .

D'HEMELIN:

Tried to escape.

LOREAU:

They are far away by this time!

CLEMENT:

They escaped!

D'HEMELIN:

They are dead, my friends. You didn't see what happened yesterday, on the other side of the canal? Some of the Boxers went around with a wicker basket on the end of a pole. There was a bleeding head in the basket . . .
(*A silence of horror.*)

CLEMENT:

If we can't get out, what are we going to do?

KERDREC:

If there is not even a way of telling a single soul in the outside world, our people, or the Allies, that we are here, still alive, and that we need help, what are we going to do?

LOREAU:

When the cartridges are gone—and the rice—and the water—what are we going to do?

D'HEMELIN:

We will fight! Fight! And you won't find *me* away from my post!

BERNARD (*entering from Consulate dejectedly*):

Consul! She is in a terrible state. I had to lock her up.

D'HEMELIN:

And the body?

BERNARD:

Finished.

D'HEMELIN:

You disposed of it?

BERNARD:

Yes. (*A pause.*)

KERDREC:

She had no more milk. The child died of hunger.

LOREAU:
I had one his age.

CLEMENT (*shaking his fist at the city*):

Ah! They'll pay us for that!

KERDREC:
We'll kill some of *them* before we die!

LOREAU:
They are fighting, but it's too far off. I'd like to see their damned yellow faces!

(*A stifled cry is heard in the distance.*)

D'HEMELIN:
Quiet! Listen . . . There was a cry.

LOREAU:
Yes . . . Quite near.
(*The same cry nearer.*)

GRAVIER:
The cry of a wounded man . . .
Morin is on guard.

CLEMENT:
He has been attacked.

D'HEMELIN:
He should have fired to give the alarm.

VOICE OF MORIN (*distant*):
Look out!

D'HEMELIN (*taking BERNARD'S rifle*):

Your rifle . . . We will see . . .
(*Signs to KERDREC, and advances.*)

VOICE OF MORIN (*nearer*):
Look out!

GRAVIER:
Attention! Ready; kneel!
(*All take shelter behind the barricade, and level their rifles.*)

MORIN (*running on*):
Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

D'HEMELIN:
What is it?

MORIN:
A man is crawling down there—in the shrubbery—I saw him . . .

GRAVIER:
A Boxer!

D'HEMELIN:
A spy!

BERNARD:
An incendiary!

CLEMENT:
Kill him!

MORIN:
No! He's a European! He's wounded, covered with blood. He crawled along. I think—I think it is—

D'HEMELIN:
Who?

MORIN:
Bornin. I think I recognized him.

OMNES:
Bornin? Bornin? Impossible!

MORIN:
He dragged himself along . . . He was panting . . . He looked like a ghost . . .

KERDREC:
Bornin!
(*The cry comes nearer.*)

CLEMENT:
Listen . . .

D'HEMELIN:
We must help him . . . (*All rush towards bridge.*) No! Only Kerdrec! The others wait here.

BORNIN (*off*):
Help! Help! Oh, Consul!
(*At the instant that the Consul and KERDREC are about to go, BORNIN raises himself with a supreme effort, rushes across the bridge, and falls on the proscenium, all so quickly that everyone recoils in horror.*)

OMNES:
Bornin? Bornin! Is it you? Where do you come from? (*etc., etc.*)

BORNIN:
Oh, I suffer! I suffer! (*They surround him. He has fallen on his el-*

bows, covered with blood, and half raising himself, shows two bleeding stumps.) How I suffer! They sawed off my hands! Help me!

(OMNES recoiling with cries of horror. A pause.)

CLEMENT (*approaching BORNIN*):
The others—where are the others?

BORNIN (*sobbing*):
Oh! Oh!

CLEMENT:
Robert?

BORNIN:
Dead.

KERDREC:
Carel?

BORNIN:
Dead.

LOREAU:
Jean-Louis?

BORNIN:
Dead! All dead! Massacred! Tortured! And I—Oh! (*They support him, and with what is left of his strength he speaks quickly, feverishly.*) I saw Carel die. They tore off his nails—put out his eyes—I heard his screams—his prayers. Oh! Then it was my turn . . . They fastened me to the same stake—wet with his blood—and then, my hands—they sawed off my hands—and then—

OMNES:
And then?

BORNIN (*very weak*):
Ah, I don't know any more. I heard a noise, like cannon. When I came to I was alone—there were splinters of shells—and gouts of blood. I called "Carel!" And I looked for his body—there was nothing left—but chunks—some here—and there—some on me.

OMNES (*horrorstricken*):
Oh!

D'HEMELIN:
Bornin! Bornin! Be brave!

MORIN:
Yes, old fellow! We'll save you!

BORNIN (*sobbing*):
Oh, my hands!

D'HEMELIN:
Be brave!

BORNIN:
My hands! My-hands! Oh! Oh!

CLEMENT:
We'll take care of you, old fellow!
We'll fix you up . . .

BORNIN:
You can't fix up my eyes—after what they have seen. If you only knew—I saw—a woman, from the Lazarist convent—they caught her, tied her, gagged her—and then—Oh! those screams!—their red-hot tongs—they . . . (*Sobbing.*) Oh! Oh!

D'HEMELIN:
Bornin!

BORNIN (*with a last effort*):
I have dragged myself here to tell you . . . They are outside . . .

D'HEMELIN:
Where?

BORNIN:
Everywhere—along the canal . . . thousands and thousands of them . . . hiding in the shrubbery . . . the fields are full of them . . . There is no hope. You can't get away . . . You are lost. So—so—

D'HEMELIN:
So?

BORNIN:
So . . . think of Carel, of me . . . of all of us! Don't let them take you alive! No! Not alive! Not alive!
(*He falls. They surround and half raise him.*)

MORNIN (*looking at him in terror*):
Oh, those eyes!

LOREAU:
Glazed already!

D'HEMELIN:

Bornin! Bornin!

CLEMENT:

He doesn't answer . . .

GRAVIER:

His heart has stopped beating.

D'HEMELIN:

Dead!

GRAVIER:

Dead.

(All stand, and uncover.)

D'HEMELIN:

Let those who believe in God pray for him! (*A long pause, the time of a prayer. Only KERDREC makes the sign of the cross.—The CONSUL, indicating the corpse*) Clement! Kerdrec! (*CLEMENT and KERDREC lift the body, and carry it away slowly. All follow in profound silence. GRAVIER and D'HEMELIN stop, allowing the others to go off. They face each other. The CONSUL, in a low voice*) My friend—you heard? No more hope?

GRAVIER (*somberly*):

It is the end this time.

D'HEMELIN (*hardly able to enunciate his words*):

And what an end! Well . . . I have a favor . . . a horrible one . . . to ask you.

GRAVIER:

Of me?

D'HEMELIN:

Of you only! I couldn't do it myself. My hands would tremble . . . that would be awful. And they mustn't take us alive . . . You, my friend . . .

GRAVIER (*following the CONSUL's look towards the Consulate, in a dead voice*):

I . . .

D'HEMELIN:

You alone . . .

GRAVIER (*terrified*):

Oh, not I! Not I!

D'HEMELIN:

You! I beg you! I beg you! . . .

GRAVIER:

But I can't! Think: here, in this place . . . Denise! It was here . . . I told her there was hope . . . we spoke of the future—and each other. We were going to tell you—later. I told her that I loved her . . .

D'HEMELIN (*thunderstruck*):

You! You love my daughter? . . . You, George? (*A pause. Then, feebly.*) Then I shall have to do it . . . I, her father . . . (*He stops; then, sadly, but resolutely*) I won't have her fall into their hands alive . . .

(*A terrific explosion. Cries. The men run on quickly. Heavy fire outside.*)

GRAVIER (*commanding*):

Kneel! Take aim! Fire!

(*The men take cover behind the barricade, and fire. The fire is answered from outside. Between shots one hears the yells of the Boxers, their cries: "Cha! Cha!", the sound of gongs, the tinkling of bells.*)

BERNARD:

Look out, Consul! They're aiming at you!

D'HEMELIN:

They aim badly.

(*A bullet whistles along the top of the barricade.*)

MORIN:

Not very badly.

LOREAU:

They're shooting straighter now.

KERDREC:

They're hitting the barricade.

(*The din increases. Cries of "Cha! Cha!" more numerous. Gongs; bells; etc.*)

BERNARD:

They're crossing the canal!

CLEMENT:

Ah! See! They're tearing down the walls!

GRAVIER:

Shoot into the shrubbery!

LOREAU (*abandoning his post*):
We're done for!

D'HEMELIN:
They're attacking on all sides.

GRAVIER:
And coming closer!
(*Cannon fire.*)

OMNES:
This way! This way! To the right!
There they are! There they are!
(*Cannon fire, very near.*)

D'HEMELIN:
Ah! Now they have cannon!

GRAVIER:
Lost! We can't hold out!

D'HEMELIN:
Get down . . . to the banks! Don't
stay here!

LOREAU (*charging*):
Forward, in the name of God!

KERDREC, MORIN, BERNARD:
Forward!

KERDREC:
Done for! But I'll kill some of 'em!

LOREAU:
They'll pay for my skin!
(*A great shout "Forward!" and they charge. Alone during the growing fusillade, GRAVIER and the CONSUL wait.*)

GRAVIER:
Don't stay here, Consul!

D'HEMELIN:
Oh, leave me.

GRAVIER:
You'll get killed.

D'HEMELIN:
You have only to die, you! (*Shoving him away brutally. Alone*) but I—
I—ah! Denise!

(*A cannon ball shatters the door of the Consulate. The screams of the terrified women are heard, and one of them, mortally wounded, falls on the steps. DENISE, panic-stricken, rushes into her father's arms.*)

DENISE:
Father! Father! Help! Help!

D'HEMELIN:
Are you hurt!

DENISE:
Let us fly! Fly! I am afraid!

D'HEMELIN:
Denise!

DENISE:
Oh, Daddy, Daddy, save me . . .
The Boxers! Save me!

D'HEMELIN:
Save you. Yes, yes.

DENISE:
They're coming! (*Cries of the wounded in the distance. The shooting comes nearer.*) They're cutting their throats! Daddy, save me! They're coming!
(*Hiding in his arms.*)

D'HEMELIN (*embracing her*):
"Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid!"
Denise, my little Denise!

DENISE:
Save me! Save me!

D'HEMELIN:
Yes, I'll save you! I'll save you!
Denise! My own Denise!

(*He draws his revolver gently with his right hand, and bringing it to the nape of his daughter's neck, he fires. Without a cry, still in her father's embrace, DENISE shivers, and her head falls. The firing continues. Then, suddenly, it slackens, stops. A pause. D'HEMELIN still holds his dead daughter in his arms. And suddenly, far off, still indistinct, a bugle echoes. The noise approaches. Drums are heard, distant cheers, terrific firing. It is the charge. Voices cry "The Allies! The Allies!"*)

KERDREC, MORIN, BERNARD, CLEMENT (*off*):

The Allies! Saved! Saved! The Allies!

(*Bugles, drums, the charge approaches—GRAVIER, wounded, fainting,*

*rushes on, and staggers to the
CONSUL.)*

GRAVIER:
Consul! Consul! We are saved!
The Allies! The Allies!

*(He stops sharply before the motion-
less D'HEMELIN, who still holds his
daughter in his arms.)*

D'HEMELIN (*a helpless lunatic,
mumbling the words*):

Saved . . . Saved . . .

*(And he lets the body of his daughter
fall to the earth, while a great din, mix-
ing with the blare of the bugles and
the crash of the drums salutes the ar-
rival and the triumph of the European
troops.)*

(THE CURTAIN FALLS SLOWLY)



RECAPITULATION

By Catulle Mendès

ROSE, Emmeline,
Margueridette
Odette,
Alix, Aline.

Paule, Hippolyte,
Lucy, Lucile,
Cécile,
Daphné, Mélite.

Artémidore,
Myrrha, Myrrhine,
Périne,
Naïs, Eudore.

.

Zulma, Zélie,
Régine, Reine,
Irène
Et j'en oublie!



NO matter how long he lives, no man ever becomes as wise as the average woman of 48.



IF a woman doesn't surprise a man, she surprises him even more.

DREAM SWEETHEARTS

By Betty McRaye

O H, have I lived to love—who knows—
When all the earth was young,
A shepherd in a grass green glade, whose pipes of
Reed glad music made,
Around my neck a garland hung,
Each bud dew-pearled, and all the world
Fresh as an opening rose.

And you—a nymph with gleaming feet,
And cheek and forehead pale and fair,
Your wildwood violet eyes, so sweet,
Shone through your clouds of hair.

Or were we lovers under skies—
Sun flooded amethyst—
And wandered on the red gold sands, as
Burnished as the red gold bands,
Pure twisted gold, on neck and wrist;
The gems you wore were pale before
The flame within your eyes.

You were some slim Egyptian maid,
I some barbaric king, your grace—
Your level brows—your hair's black braid,
I loved—your glowing face.

Or was it only yesterday
We danced the minuet,
Your eyes kissed mine across the room, your
Powdered hair—your cheeks' rich bloom—
The roguish patch—I see them yet;
My flashing sword—The harpsichord—
When all the night was gay.

You were the toast of half the town,
And I your beau the gossip ran,
As trailing your brocaded gown
You flirted with your fan.

We live to-day, my girl of girls,
To kiss the lips we love,
I liked the fashion of your dress, an
Empire was it or Princess?
I liked your perfect Paris glove,
Your wide winged hat, and under that
Your hair's soft waves and curls.

Your little high heeled shoe displayed
The prettiest foot—Oh, kindly fate,
Go, Sweetheart Shades that faint and fade,
I love you up to date. . . .

ALGERNON JONES

By Gertrude Forster

"WHY, how *old* he looks!" Bald, grayish-yellow, shrunken and wrinkled almost out of human semblance, he lay, swathed in oils, wrappings and hot-water bottles, stare-eyed, open-mouthed—the very crystallization of age.

Handing her sable muff to the nurse, the lady bent over him, drew down the coverings and exclaimed again,

"But, Doctor, how terribly *old*!"

He *was* old, infinitely old, as old as Sin, yet, as Nature reckons these things, his age was just minus two months.

"Old?" the medical superintendent laughed. "Why, certainly, all the 'premies' look that way."

"Premies?"

"That's what we call the premature babies."

She nodded comprehendingly, and extricated a lorgnette from her furs and laces.

"He's exceedingly ugly," she decided, after a leisurely lorgnette inspection of the wrinkled little head. Doubling up her tiny, white-gloved hand, she placed it on the pillow.

"Why, his head isn't as big as my fist."

The second doctor, a young intern, smiled approvingly on the tiny fist.

"And yours is a very small hand," he murmured.

The lady was pretty and young.

She picked up the card tied on the iron bar behind the very old new baby and read,

"Algernon Jones."

Both doctors laughed. Even the little blue and white nurse smiled.

"Yes," enlightened the medical superintendent, "the staff is rather pleased about that name."

"Common people," drawled the lady smilingly, "do choose such grotesque names."

The nurse fidgetted.

"Well, that's not exactly the case here," explained the superintendent. "You see, *we* named him."

"You?"

"Yes, we doctors. 'Jones,' to offset inquiries as to relatives, and 'Algernon,' to offset the 'Jones.'"

"Oh, how clever! And does he just lie here all day?"

She indicated, with expensive aloofness, the long, compartmented bed. It looked like a little white iron sofa, divided into five tiny square compartments, in each of which lay a little sleeping or howling scrap of humanity. The room held many such five-fold cots, and the lady was ushered around, while here and there some particular infant would be extricated and held up to view.

"Pretty baby, this," said the superintendent proudly; "he's my favourite."

"I don't think any of them pretty," declared the lady petulantly.

"Oh, just one minute," begged the young intern. "Wait till I show you *my* favourite, the prettiest baby in the hospital."

He crossed the ward and returned with a week-old baby in his arms.

Graciously the lady inspected it.

"Well, perhaps I am not a judge, you see I have none of my own, but to me they are all quite, oh, undeniably, ugly, so I think I prefer," laughing, "Algernon Jones. His hideousness is interesting."

She returned to his little square compartment and drew down the wrappings.

"Repulsive little mite," she muttered. "What's the mother like?"

"Dead. Staggered in one night last week, and before we knew it she was dead, and Algernon Jones, three pounds of puny antiquity, left on our hands."

"And you know nothing of her?"

"No. We asked the name of the father, and she said there was none."

"And her own name?"

"Unconscious before we found it out."

The lady smiled.

"Oh, 'Jones' will do very well."

She paused, then laughed.

"Do you know, I believe I'll adopt Algernon Jones."

Both doctors started. The nurse gasped.

"Oh, you mustn't," expostulated the young intern. "He'll turn out badly. He's no good. Physically, morally, every way, he's handicapped."

"That's just it. Didn't someone somewhere say something about 'all men being born free and equal'? Well, Algie here is unequal, horribly *unequal*—physically, financially, socially, morally, every way. He appeals to my sense of humor. Will he live?"

The nurse was uncertain.

"We don't know. We wish he'd die. He's still only three pounds, but he just lies there and refuses either to live or die."

The lady frowned.

"Oh, of course, I was only joking. It's no affair of mine. And," she knitted her brows in pretty perplexity and smiled at the young doctor who had admired her hand, "I suppose there must be a reckoning somewhere—you know, for these vicious creatures—now, you see, the father escapes, the mother,

cowardly, dies out of it, so, well," she glowed at her conclusive brilliance, "why, of course, Algie must pay the reckoning."

No one disputed her philosophy.

She looked at him again, made a little face and turned away with a shudder.

"Oh, no, I was joking. No, thank you, I prefer my little Pompey."

The superintendent looked relieved.

"You *were* mean," she continued poutingly, "not to let me bring Pompey up here. Poor little doggie, with that horrid man looking after him. He'll be so frightened. No, thank you, I don't care to see the private babies. No, really. You see, I had never visited a maternity hospital, and I thought it might be amusing."

They moved to the elevator. She drew her furs about her.

"Doctor," she queried idly, "what will they do with Algernon Jones, if he does live?"

"Oh, pack him off to some foundling asylum."

"Oh, of course, the right place for him."

They left the elevator. An attendant advanced with a white Pomeranian on leash. The pretty lady rushed forward.

"Oh, Pompey, Pompey, you dear little doggie-oggie! Was Mistress bad to leave you so long? Well, come along," stooping and lifting the ball of white fluff. "Come to your Mistress, who has been so awf'y lonesome for her little doggie."

She smiled radiantly at the young doctor.

"Isn't he a beauty? Has six blue ribbons."



L A femme, chez les sauvages, est une bête de somme; en Orient, un meuble; en Europe, un enfant gâté.

MISADVENTURE

By Guy Holt

IN spite of the years and the distance which still separated them, he knew at once that it must be she. Indeed, at a hundred yards or so her face was too indistinctly seen for the work of time to be apparent upon it; it was by her figure, quiet, erect, with a certain quality of resoluteness about it, that he recognized her. He noted, with an almost undiscerned thrill, that it was still slender and maidenly; and it was then, with a shocking suddenness, that he realized the passage of years since he first heard of her marriage.

Sixteen! He paused perceptibly in his approach toward her, and his mind ran swiftly back to their last meeting. He had been about to leave the country for a long time—possibly a year—and so he had called to bid her good-bye on the eve of departure. He recalled every detail of the meeting with quick vividness: his absurd feeling of importance at the mission that had been intrusted to him; his awkwardly concealed distress at leaving her; her pretense of indifference. Then had come words suddenly—a quick bubbling-up of wrath that was at first more than half pretentious. He remembered how it arose over the subject of letters and how he, not yet serious, had goaded her into anger, intending to make it up in a moment and smother the quarrel with kisses. It had been a diversion on his part—a bit of self-indulgence. Then in a moment he had found himself really angry. So the explosion—hard words, taunts, and the swift swooping down of tragedy upon them.

The next day and the next had found him with the misery of that night heavy upon him. He flung himself distract-

edly into his work; but it brought him only weariness. There was an emptiness within him—a feeling as of something uprooted and set adrift. Again and again he told himself that it was absurd to worry over so slight a thing as their quarrel; it was a childish thing and of no account. The important consideration was that they loved each other; and that nothing could affect. Yet he found himself tossing sleeplessly in his bunk of nights and unable to fling off the black sense of disaster.

Then came a change. This was no tragedy after all; merely the silly culmination of a foolish momentary anger. Already the edge of his rancor had worn blunt; surely Elenor would be no more perverse. And immediately all those arguments he had raised against his black mood appeared to him again, bringing conviction this time where before they had seemed but so many words. In this mood of hope he had written her humbly, even abjectly, begging her forgiveness for his part in the affair, for which he took more blame than was his due. It was this mood that was irretrievably shattered by a note from her aunt—who had always disapproved of the match—returning his letter and informing him with scant politeness that Elenor did not wish to hear from him—that by the time he received this letter she would be another's wife.

Real tragedy that time! At first he did not believe it and had written letter after letter, begging her for confirmation or denial of her aunt's note. But there came no answer until after several weeks the letters he had written were returned to him with no word.

They brought conviction with them and it had hurt. It had been a full month before it had come to him that he must shut his teeth and be a man for his own sake. . . .

Sixteen years . . .

He realized with a shock that he had been standing for a full minute on the path, staring at no visible object. He gathered himself together and looked at her again. Would she know him? The same slenderly virginal figure; but as he drew nearer he saw that time had not entirely ignored her. There were small signs for the discerning eye to read: a more conscious resoluteness, as if strain and conflict had brought it forth. Had matters not gone well with her, then?

It was at this moment that she looked at him, and there was no doubt of her recognition. The shadows of many emotions passed across her face; but it was without hesitation that she walked toward him, her hand outstretched.

"David." Her tone breathed pleasure, surprise and (for a moment he fancied) a kind of hunger. There was no doubt of the presence of this hunger in his: "Elenor!"

Each was visibly embarrassed, thinking of the past, so that for the moment they had no further words of greeting. It was he who broke the silence, lamely, with a triteness he acutely recognized.

"You are well, I hope."

She laughed. "Very well," she said. "I am just taking a short walk in the park. What are you doing here?"

Quite naturally they had walked over to a vacant bench, and were now seated side by side. He turned to her.

"I'm here on business for the day. Oh—in the park, do you mean. Strolling, like yourself. Do you often come here?"

She was silent for a moment, knowing that his question was of no real importance. Each was still agitated from the meeting, and one cannot instantly step back into an intimacy that has lain dead these many years. A certain amount of maneuvering with idle talk is necessary before real thoughts come

easily into expression. Now both were mute, dreading equally the crude silence and cruder words.

It was she who first expressed both their thoughts.

"Sixteen years!" She dwelt upon it for a moment, as if only so she could realize the passage of time. Then she turned upon him, swiftly, almost fiercely.

"Tell me," she cried. "Why did you never come?"

He looked at her, astonished. "Come? Come? But your aunt's letter— Your marriage—"

She drew her breath in quickly, her eyes fastened intently upon his face. "She told you that I—?"

"Surely you knew," he faltered. "She wrote me of your marriage to Langdon. I—I couldn't write to wish you well."

He looked down and noticed that her gloved hands seemed tense in her lap. Had he looked at her face he would have seen how great was her agitation. He did sense it, but nevertheless he continued lamely:

"No. At the time I couldn't. It was—" he stopped abruptly, fancying that he detected in his voice an echo of the anguish of years before. Then he resumed more passively. "Later I didn't know where a letter would find you. I've often wondered these years—"

She interrupted. "You've thought of me, then?"

He became guarded at once at the self-rebuke he read in her tone. He had remembered her the moment before as she had been as a girl—just and almost morbidly conscientious in all things (it had been his knowledge of these very qualities that made her jilting of him the more bitter and inexplicable) and he felt that the woman beside him was of the stuff of her girlhood, unhardened by the years. He must not allow pity or blame to enter into this meeting; and immediately the conversation became to his mind a strange inverted duel of words in which each combatant strove to do himself a

hurt. He resolved upon a bold attack—to banish by a seeming indifference the possibilities of their joint memories becoming too poignant.

"Yes, I have wondered about you. Wondered where you were and if you were well. Life's a queer thing, Elenor,"—he smiled at his own triteness—"and few of us master it. The rest of us are mastered—rushed along by 'blind circumstance,' as we call it, but perhaps it is we who are blind. That's fatalism, I suppose. But during the years I've knocked about alone, I've thought frequently that possibly the mastered ones are happier—that circumstance has led them more wisely than their own stumbling feet could go. They wake up some day finding that it is they who are the masters after all. It was that thought, I believe, that consoled me about ourselves those first few years. Although I'll confess that my thoughts were hard at first. I didn't take easily to being one of the mastered ones. But now—I don't know. Since I've settled down—"

She had sat watching him with an ever-increasing look of astonishment on her face. Now she broke in. "Oh," she breathed quickly, "you mean—you're married?"

He looked at her a moment and what he saw in her eyes spelled to him pity and self-condemnation, mingled with the hope that he had not been irretrievably made unhappy by the loss of her. A smaller woman, he knew, would have felt a false reticence and avoided the question; a vain woman would have asked it in a different spirit; but he felt that Elenor's concern was only for him and he answered accordingly.

"Yes," he said.

There was a moment's silence. Then—"Tell me about her."

"No," he objected, smiling, "we are talking about *you*."

The sweet gravity of her face, upon which, for a moment, a smile hovered in answer to him, sent his mind leaping back over the years. He brushed the memories aside.

"Come," he said. "Let's go where

we can talk. There's a tea room over here. I'm alone to-day. If you are free—"

He hardly waited for her assurance to lead her toward the little green door, which had been visible from their bench. It was astonishing how faithful memory had been to small details. This walking by her side, now—Had there been a gap of years between it and the last time that it seemed so familiar an act? . . . Again he realized that it was not wise to remember too much, and he was grateful for the interruption that their arrival at the tea room occasioned.

It was still early in the afternoon, and they had the restful little room almost to themselves. A waitress hovered over them for a moment; bustled efficiently between their table and the kitchen; and then they were left alone over the fragrant cups.

He waited for her to speak, although on his lips trembled the hundreds of questions in which solicitude took form. He had scarcely known Langdon. Had the latter made her happy? he wondered, and dismissed the sudden jealous conviction that no other man could have understood her as well as he, himself, did, even now, or have so well met her moods. Then he grew aware that he was staring blankly at her, and he laughed an apology.

"Well," she said, "if I am on the rack!—What shall I tell you?"

The question "Are you happy?" almost burst from him, but he restrained it. "Tell me all about yourself," he said. "What you do, what you think. How you are. Tell me about your husband and—and—"

"Children?" She finished the sentence for him. She hesitated somewhat, he observed, and he put it down to the embarrassment of her memories. They had quarreled once, he recalled, in the early days of their engagement, about the name that should be given to their first child. And there had never been any first—

She was speaking.

"Yes," she was saying. "There are

two—both boys. Philip and Keene. . . . Oh, I don't know that there is much to tell. Walter is a lawyer here and we have our home uptown. The boys are in school, of course, and I—Oh, I'm just a woman. I suppose that's all there is to us," she concluded nervously, after a moment.

But he protested.

"But yourself! What do you *do*? And the boys! Why, there must be millions of things you could tell me. How old did you say they were? Lively little beggars, I'll wager." He was maneuvering for time—staving off the inevitable demand for an account of his own family.

She was speaking again, still haltingly.

"Oh, I? I'm afraid that I'm a very ordinary mother. But the boys *are* interesting, even to strangers. They're sturdy little fellows and very honest. Keene—he's nine—is the more imaginative of the two. . . ."

He was not listening to her. He had ceased battling with memory now. Instead, he let it carry him back, willingly, to the times that he had tried to forget, which he thought he had forgotten, and which he only now realized, were to him not a part of the past at all, but were instead his real present, the things that counted most with him. Then he found himself imagining that this woman across from whom he sat, with all the appearance of polite attention on his face, had never been lost to him. He found himself doubting her marriage almost, and he nearly seized the gloved hand, on which, he almost believed, he would have felt his own ring. And then he was listening to her again, and he knew how true all the gray past was. Why, she was talking about her boys—hers and Langdon's, and they were sturdy little fellows, with very serious eyes (like hers, he thought) who climbed upon her knee and asked innumerable questions. God! he could picture them.

Yet it was hard to believe. She was so entirely the girl who had been his—the resolute, virginal little thing he had

remembered through so many years—grown so slightly older. It was as if nothing had ever been but their glad youth. There had been a long, bad dream, but now they were together again with no outside things—no husband or children between him and her dear self. Suddenly he found words coming to him: words that said that he loved her and always would; that she loved him and that they were free, there was nothing to keep them from coming to each other and making up for the dead, dreary years—and it was only when he saw her draw herself up with a gasp after consulting the little wrist watch that he realized that he had only thought and not said them.

"Oh," she was saying, "how I've rambled on! I must go at once. And I did so want to hear of you."

He called for and paid the bill in a dull ache and they left the place together.

"I take the car here," she said. "No, don't trouble to come with me. I'll be all right. I'm sorry I can't ask you to visit us—you and—your wife. But you say you are going—"

"Yes," he interrupted, almost roughly. "I'm sorry. I'm alone this trip. And I leave to-morrow, as I said."

"I remembered that," she replied.

He barely touched the hand she extended to him. Then she was on the car and he was alone, standing bare-headed in the afternoon sunlight.

* * * * *

She climbed wearily up the stairs that led to her lonely apartment and sat for a long time, without removing her cloak, staring at the dingy street. Two sturdy little fellows, a neighbor's children, playing there, looked up and waved their hands to her; but she hardly saw them. With serious eyes they watched her turn away from the window. Then one called to the other:

"Come on, Keene, let's go and play ball."

"All right, Phil," cried the other, and the two scrambled up the street.

She turned away with a sigh and set about removing her things.

"And so it was Aunt's work, after all," she said, half aloud. "But, oh, I had to lie. I couldn't let him see. And he's happy, now, anyway."

She removed her gloves slowly, and her hands were bare of any ring.

* * * * *

In another lonely room, a man strode

up and down, thumbing the past with his mind. He had no one in the world of his own—no one—but he felt no regret for any lie he had told that day. And he was longing passionately for another man's wife and for a sight of the children of those two.



LES REVENANTS

By Willard Wattles

THE thoughts I think were old when Tyre
 Raised high her haughty head,
 I mouth the moral homilies
 Of men ten centuries dead.

In all my stretching after faith,
 In my dark unbelief
 I have not learned what Socrates
 Said to silence grief.

The old, old words Confucius framed,
 Walking the ways of men,
 Three thousand years thereafter stalk
 And startle thought again.

The old dreams blossom into stone,
 And nothing perisheth,—
 Let others cherish a wasting flame
 And juggle dice with Death;

But I, I barter an age-worn coin
 For a loaf of present bread,
 For I was gray when Paradise
 Spread Adam's marriage bed.

And I can fiddle a fancy air
 On a squeaky violin,
 And squander the penny that drops in my hat
 For a moth-eaten sin.



THE BROKEN LUTE

By Theodosia Garrison

GOOD-BYE, my song—I, who found words for sorrow
Offer my joy today a useless lute.
In the deep night I sang me of the morrow;
The sun is on my face and I am mute.

Good-bye, my song, in you was all my yearning;
The prayer for this poor heart I wore so long.
Now love heaps roses where the wounds were burning;
What need have I for song?

Long since I sang of all one dreams—and misses;
How may I sing to-day who know no wrong?
My lips are all for laughter and for kisses.
Good-bye, my song.



SUSPICION

LOOKING into your eyes I doubt their sincerity,
Listening to your talk I question your motive,
Seeing your smile I wonder what's behind it.
In you I am always feeling about for falsity,
Suspecting you of being human.



AMAN is as old as he feels, but a woman, alas, is usually a good deal older.



TO be a successful clergyman a man must be buttered on both sides.



LOVE at first sight: a labor-saving device.



THE THREE INFERNAL JOKES

By Lord Dunsany

THIS is the story that the desolate man told to me on the lonely Highland road one autumn evening with winter coming on and the stags roaring.

The saddening twilight, the mountain already black, the dreadful melancholy of the stags' voices, his friendless, mournful face, all seemed to be of some most sorrowful play staged in that valley by an outcast god, a lonely play of which the hills were part and he the only actor.

For long we watched each other drawing out of the solitudes of those forsaken spaces. Then when we met he spoke.

"I will tell you a thing that will make you die of laughter. I will keep it to myself no longer. But first I must tell you how I came by it."

I do not give the story in his words with all his woful interjections and the misery of his frantic self-reproaches, for I would not convey unnecessarily to my readers that atmosphere of sadness that was about all he said, and that seemed to go with him wherever he moved.

It seems that he had been a member of a club, a West-end club he called it, a respectable but quite inferior affair, probably in the city; agents belonged to it, fire insurance mostly, but life insurance and motor agents, too; it was, in fact, a touts' club.

It seems that a few of them one evening, forgetting for a moment their encyclopedias and non-stop tires, were talking loudly over a card-table when the game had about ended about their personal virtues, and a very little man with waxed mustaches who disliked the

taste of wine was boasting heartily of his temperance. It was then that he who told this mournful story, drawn on by the boasts of others, leaned forward a little over the green baize into the light of the two guttering candles and revealed, no doubt a little shyly, his own extraordinary virtue. One woman was to him as ugly as another.

And the silenced boasters rose and went home to bed leaving him all alone, as he supposed, with his unequalled virtue. And yet he was not alone; for, when the rest had gone, there arose a member out of a deep arm-chair at the dark end of the room and walked across to him, a man whose occupation he did not know and only now suspects.

"You have," said the stranger, "a surpassing virtue."

"I have no possible use for it," my poor friend replied.

"Then doubtless you would sell it cheap," said the stranger.

Something in the man's manner or appearance made the desolate teller of this mournful tale feel his own inferiority, which probably made him feel acutely shy, so that his mind abased itself as an Oriental does his body in the presence of a superior; or perhaps he was sleepy or merely a little drunk. Whatever it was, he only mumbled "Oh, yes," instead of contradicting so mad a remark. And the stranger led the way to the room where the telephone was.

"I think you will find my firm will give you a good price for it," he said; and without more ado he began with a pair of pincers to cut the wire of the telephone and the receiver. The old waiter who looked after the club they

had left shuffling round the other room putting things away for the night.

"Whatever are you doing of?" said my friend.

"This way," said the stranger. Along a passage they went and away to the back of the club, and there the stranger leaned out of a window and fastened the severed wires to the lightning conductor. My friend has no doubt of that, a broad ribbon of copper, half an inch wide, perhaps wider, running down from the roof to the earth.

"Hell," said the stranger, with his mouth to the telephone, then silence for awhile with his ear to the receiver, leaning out of the window. And then my friend heard his poor virtue being several times repeated, and then words like "Yes" and "No."

"They offer you three jokes," said the stranger, "which shall make all who hear them simply die of laughter."

I think my friend was reluctant then to have anything more to do with it; he wanted to go home; he said he didn't want jokes.

"They think very highly of your virtue," said the stranger.

And at that, odd as it seems, my friend wavered, for logically if they thought highly of the goods they should have paid a higher price.

"Oh, all right," he said.

The extraordinary document that the agent drew from his pocket ran something like this: "I, _____, in consideration of three new jokes received from Mr. Montagu-Montague, hereinafter to be called the agent, and warranted to be as by him stated and described, do assign to him, yield, abrogate and give up all recognitions, emoluments, perquisites or rewards due to me here or elsewhere on account of the following virtue, to wit: and that is to say . . . that all women are to me equally ugly." The last eight words being filled in in ink by Mr. Montagu-Montague.

My poor friend duly signed it.

"These are the jokes," said the agent.

They were boldly written on three slips of paper.

"They don't seem very funny," said the other when he had read them.

"You are immune," said Mr. Montagu-Montague, "but anyone else who hears them will simply die of laughter; that we guarantee."

An American firm had bought at the price of waste paper a hundred thousand copies of the Dictionary of Electricity—written when electricity was new—and it had turned out that even at the time its author had not rightly grasped his subject—the firm had paid £10,000 to a respectable English paper (no other in fact than the *Briton*) for the use of its name; and to obtain orders for the *Briton* Dictionary of Electricity was the occupation of my unfortunate friend. He seems to have had a way with him. Apparently he knew by a glance at a man, or a look round at his garden, whether to recommend the book as "an absolutely up-to-date achievement, the finest thing of its kind in the world of modern science" or as "at once quaint and imperfect, a thing to buy and to keep as a tribute to those dear old times that are gone." So he went on with this quaint though usual business, putting aside the memory of that night as an occasion on which he had "somewhat exceeded" as they say in circles where a spade is called neither a spade nor an agricultural implement, but is never mentioned at all, being altogether too vulgar.

And then one night he put on his suit of dress clothes and found the three jokes in the pocket. That was perhaps a shock. He seems to have thought it over carefully then, and the end of it was he gave a dinner at the club to twenty of the members. The dinner would do no harm, he thought—might even help the business—and if the joke came off he would be a witty fellow, and two jokes still up his sleeve.

Whom he invited or how the dinner went I do not know, for he began to speak rapidly and come straight to the point, as a stick that nears a cataract suddenly goes faster and faster. The dinner was duly served, the port went round, the twenty men were smoking,

two waiters loitered, when after carefully reading the worst of the jokes he told it down the table.

They laughed. One man accidentally inhaled his cigar smoke and spluttered; the two waiters overheard and tittered behind their hands; one man, a bit of a raconteur himself, quite clearly wished not to laugh, but his veins swelled dangerously in trying to keep it back and in the end he laughed, too. The joke had succeeded; my friend smiled at the thought; he wished to say little deprecating things to the man on his right, but the laughter did not stop and the waiters would not be silent. He waited, and waited wondering, the laughter went roaring on, distinctly louder now and the waiters as loud as any. It had gone on for three or four minutes when this frightful thought leaped up all at once in his mind: *it was forced laughter!*

How ever could anything have induced him to tell so foolish a joke? He saw its absurdity as in revelation, and the more he thought of it as these people laughed at him, even the waiters, too, the more he felt that he could never lift up his head with his brother touts again. And still the laughter went roaring and choking on. He was very angry. There was not much use in having a friend, he thought, if one silly joke could not be overlooked; he had fed them, too. And then he felt that he had no friends at all, and his anger faded away and a great unhappiness came down on him and he got quietly up and slunk from the room and slipped away from the club.

Poor man, he scarcely had the heart next morning to glance at the papers; but you did not need to glance at them; big type was bandied about that day as though it were common print, the words of the headlines stared at you, and the headlines said Twenty-Two Dead Men at a Club.

Yes, he saw it then: the laughter had not stopped, some had probably burst blood-vessels, some must have choked, some succumbed to nausea, heart-failure must have mercifully taken some,

and they were his friends after all, and none had escaped, not even the waiters. It was that infernal joke.

He thought swiftly, and remembers, clear as a nightmare, the drive to Victoria station, the boat train to Dover, and going disguised to the boat; and on the boat, pleasantly smiling, almost obsequious, two constables that wished to speak for a moment with Mr. Watkyn Jones. That was his name.

In a third-class carriage with handcuffs on his wrist, with forced conversation when any, he returned between his captors to Victoria to be tried for murder at the High Court of Bow.

At the trial he was defended by a young lawyer of considerable ability who had gone into the Cabinet in order to enhance his forensic reputation, and he was ably defended. It is no exaggeration to say that the speech for the defense showed it to be usual, even natural and right, to give a dinner to twenty men and to slip away without ever saying a word, leaving all, with the waiters, dead. That was the impression left in the minds of the jury. And Mr. Watkyn Jones felt himself practically free, with all the advantages of his awful experience, and his two jokes intact. But lawyers are still experimenting with the new act which allows a prisoner to give evidence. They do not like to make no use of it for fear they may be thought not to know of the act, and a lawyer who is not in touch with the very latest laws is soon regarded as not being up to date, and he may drop as much as £50,000 a year in fees. And, therefore, though it always hangs their clients they hardly like to neglect it.

Mr. Watkyn Jones was put in the witness box. There he told the simple truth, and a very poor affair it seemed after the impassioned and beautiful things that were uttered by the counsel for the defense. Men and women had wept when they heard that. They did not weep when they heard Watkyn Jones. Some tittered. It no longer seemed a right and natural thing to leave one's guests all dead and to fly

the country. Where was Justice, they asked, if anyone could do that? And when his story was told the judge rather happily asked if he could make him die of laughter, too. And what was the joke? For in so grave a place as a Court of Justice no fatal effects need be feared.

And hesitatingly the prisoner pulled from his pocket the three slips of paper; and perceived for the first time that the one on which the first joke had been written had become quite blank. Yet he could remember it, and only too clearly. And he told it from memory to the Court:

"An Irishman once on being asked by his master to buy him a morning paper said in his usual witty way, 'Arrah and begorrah and I will be after wishing you the top of the morning'."

No joke is quite so good the second time it is told, it seems to lose something of its essence, but Watkyn Jones was not prepared for the awful stillness with which this one was received; nobody smiled; and it had killed twenty-two men. The joke was bad, devilish bad, counsel for the defense was frowning, and an usher was looking in a little bag for something the judge wanted. And at this moment, as though from far away, without his wishing it, there entered the prisoner's head and shone there and would not go, this old bad proverb "As well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb."

The jury seemed to be just about to retire. "I have another joke," said Watkyn Jones, and there and then he read from the second slip of paper. He watched the paper curiously to see if it would go blank, occupying his mind with so slight a thing as men in dire stress very often do, and the words were almost instantly expunged, swept swift-

ly as if by a hand, and he saw the paper before him as blank as the first. And they were laughing this time, judge, jury, counsel for the prosecution, audience, and all, and the grim men that watched him upon either side. There was no mistake about this joke.

He did not stay to see the end, and walked out with his eyes fixed on the ground, unable to bear a glance to the right or left.

And since then he has wandered, avoiding ports and roaming lonely places. Two years have known him on the Highland roads, often hungry, always friendless, always changing his district, wandering lonely on with his deadly joke.

Sometimes for a moment he will enter inns, driven by cold and hunger, and hear men in the evening telling jokes, and even challenging him, but he sits desolate and silent, lest his only weapon should escape from him and his last joke spread mourning in a hundred cots. His beard has grown and turned gray and is mixed with moss and weeds, so that no one, I think, not even the police, would recognize him now for that dapper tout that sold *The Briton Dictionary of Electricity* in such a different land.

He paused, his story told; and then his lips quivered as though he would say more, and I believe he intended there and then to yield up his deadly joke on that Highland road and go forth then with his three blank slips of paper, perhaps to a felon's cell with one more murder added to his crimes, but harmless at last to man. I therefore hurried on, and only heard him mumbling sadly behind me, standing, bowed and broken, all alone in the twilight, perhaps telling over and over even then the last infernal joke.



THE PROPOSAL

By Hugh Blair

WHILE fumbling for her handkerchief her hand touches his. With the contact her nerves twitch and she gasps—holds her breath; and he his. Then his fingers gently close over hers and in an effort to cover his embarrassment he playfully tries to pull the bit of cambric from her grasp. She smiles, but avoids looking towards him; as earnestly as he, she gazes at the flitting pictures on the screen before them. All about, close beside, behind and in front, are people, many people—patrons of fifteen-cent Sardou-dom.

Half-heartedly, knowing that she knows that it is only a ruse to cover his eagerness to grasp her hand, he continues to play at snatching at her handkerchief. And she, as playfully, allows it to run a little way through her fingers . . . and then as deftly snatches it back before he takes it wholly from her grasp. By this time his fingers hold two of hers—the thumb and forefinger which hold the handkerchief. She extends her grasp, the handkerchief is held tight in her little hand . . . gradually, slowly, his fingers cover her unresisting fingers until he has her hand wholly within his.

Now embarrassment overwhelms him and he almost permits the hand and the handkerchief to drop from his fingers as he seems to turn to the flickering pictures. She senses the change and with a shy glance at him slowly plays at withdrawing her hand. He refuses to relinquish it and again begins to play at snatching the bit of cambric . . . but she holds tight to a corner . . . and smiles in the dusk of the theater.

His grasp on the little rag is tightening and as if fearing that he will deprive her of the article, she puts up her other hand and seizes the tiny corner.

The second hand touches his . . . and for a moment it lies quiet. The smile dies away from his lips . . . he looks away . . . directly in front . . . at the pictures. Abruptly he moves, leans closer, still looking at the screen, and into her ear makes some inane remark which she doesn't catch . . . but no matter . . . she has lost interest in the pictures and is gazing, dreamy-eyed, into the darkness before her. Her thoughts turn from the romance on the screen to her own, the one that is coming—is about at hand.

Yet neither smiles.

Her second hand lies in her lap, just touching his fingers which tightly hold the hand with the handkerchief. He sighs. Slowly, as if afraid at his impudence, his fingers rove over the second hand. She is motionless . . . he hesitates, yet she gives him no encouragement . . . nor warning. He begins again, almost fiercely . . . and crushes both hands in his roughened palm, her single ring biting into her firm flesh. . . . Both look at the pictures. . . .

She naively glances at him, but quickly looks away when she encounters his eyes trying to peer into her face. His body stiffens for a moment . . . and then his other hand comes stealing over and helps encompass hers. She sighs . . . and leans closer to him. Once more she glances at him shyly. And as shyly he gazes back at her.

They whisper, their heads almost touching in the semi-darkness. The pictures are forgotten . . . his strong

hands hurt hers . . . now he whispers
alone while she listens . . . he pleads,
gently, peering into her shadowed face
. . . then more silence . . . she seems
to give consent . . . their hands un-
lock . . . he struggles for a moment;

then a finger is thrust into his mouth
. . . it comes out and there is a flash
as of gold as he slips a ring from his
moistened finger and places it on her
left hand. . .
They are engaged.



I KNOW THAT YOU WHOM I LOVE TODAY

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

I KNOW that you whom I love today
Will sometime pass out of my life,
And all this joy and laughter,
This love that lights my heart
Will be no more. . .
And I will be left lonely
As all women. . .

I know that the glory of this dream
That came like the breath of spring,
All this bloom and beauty
As of a thousand dawns,
This gladness of meeting lips
And this great calm of the spirit
Cannot last forever. . .

I know that some day I shall walk alone
Looking with eyes that cannot weep
Upon the future desolate. . .



WHAT you have never told your sweetheart your wife can never use for
blackmail.



THE average teetotaler is the sort of man one wouldn't care to drink with—
even if he drank.



NO matter how happily a woman may be married, it always pleases her to
discover that there is a nice man who wishes that she were not.

THUS WAS IT EVER

By Maurice Samuel

THE Cynic and the Young Man leaned back luxuriously in their chairs, and watched the slow and sinuous wreaths of smoke swimming on a background of velvet, gilt and good brown oak. There was a smile on their lips: on the face of the Cynic it spelt amusement pure and simple, tinged perhaps with a little contempt: on the face of the Young Man it spelt contempt pure and simple, tinged perhaps with a little amusement.

The Cynic broke the long silence that had ensued on the Young Man's request. He spoke slowly, even melodiously, being a man who knew the value of voice and pause in narration. Now and again he lifted the cigar to his lips to make a full stop, or to mark the end of a paragraph.

"In my marriage," he said, stressing the proprietary pronoun, "I was the direct victim of a conspiracy of circumstances. Of course, all men are, I suppose, such victims more or less: I was one of those who see the knife suspended and cannot budge, who see the Juggernaut roll nearer, and dare not flee. Constitutionally, you know, I am incapable of refusing to respond to circumstances. I am Matthew Arnold's perfect poet, going through life with appropriate emotions.

"I cannot remember first meeting my future wife: but remembering the long list of fatalities which forced my reluctant hand throughout all my premarital history, I can say that I need never have met her, just as, later, I need never have married her. In fact all my life has been a history of 'needed-nots' and 'yet-dids.' But, after all, what does it matter? If it hadn't been

she, it would have been another. Having to marry, one must marry somebody, I suppose.

"But to return:

"Very early in our acquaintance-ship I discovered what a remarkable power she had for precipitating action. Every one of my dealings with her, from the first rash blunder to the last, was unpremeditated. I don't think I ever wanted to marry her. I am not a marrying man, Heaven knows.

"She had a way of making one feel uneasy: perhaps I would only be right in saying a way of making me feel uneasy. I always felt as though I hadn't quite capped our conversation; there always appeared a lack of finality. It left an unpleasant strain, a kind of breathless suspended feeling. Something was needed as a wind-up. It was very painful.

"I remember the very first dance at which we were together. We went separately. It was one of our college affairs, jolly little affairs they were, too. Somehow I filled half her program for her before the refreshment interval, so that we danced often, and had a chance of talking. I was a fool, you know, because I knew even by then how dangerous she was to me. But as I say, it's all one: if not she, somebody else.

"I booked with her the two dances immediately preceding the interval: a two-step and a waltz. We were very dignified at college. No new dances, nothing not traditionally permissible. In the late hours of the evening, however, our staidest and stateliest Lancers became as unfettered as the flightiest modern corybantics. But that's by the way.

"We talked nonsense as we danced, naturally; but it was enjoyable nonsense. Towards the end of the dance the conversation became positively flip-pant; in respond to a remark of mine she threatened me with summary punishment, whereupon, because I couldn't help it, because it was the thing to say, because it was *the* cap to her remark, to sum up, because I must respond to circumstances, I said that I had never before felt like kissing the rod. I insist that I did not say it because I wanted to kiss her; I said it because I am doomed to say that kind of thing. Anyway, I said it, and there it was!

"Now what could I do? It was undoubtedly up to me to kiss her. I felt it as a debt of honor to be paid at all cost.

"And then began one of those fencing bouts; you know the kind of thing, I do not doubt. One dodges, and parries, and approaches the subject. One tries to get at the thing apropos; both of us knew, I am certain, what we were driving at, but unless we arrived at it naturally it would seem merely vulgar and brutish. The artistic prelude to the kiss was everything: the kiss nothing.

"By the time the end of the first dance had come round I had managed to propose that we should sit out the second dance. There was the first great step accomplished. That was easy enough; it was done by an insistent deprecation of my dancing abilities. When we had got into the little, deserted smokeroom, the great difficulty was reverting to the subject. But let me spare you the harrowing details. The point of the whole thing lies here. Unless I had kissed her, I would never have been able to look her in the face again. I would have gone home and wriggled and writhed and squirmed in agony as the biggest coward—no, villain—for not to have kissed her would have seemed sheer villainy—on the whole of God's green earth.

"It had to be done—and I did it. But, having kissed her, could one stop there, leave it as a little detached incident? I beg you to notice the inevita-

bility of it all. It was Greek drama, in its finest sense.

"But, would you believe it, at one time I thought I had escaped. I forget exactly how the thing came about. I believe that she was forced to disappoint me in two consecutive appointments. Then the long vacation came off. They went somewhere to Scotland, I went to Switzerland. We lost touch with each other for quite a time, a couple of months I should think, and we didn't meet again till the beginning of the Christmas term.

"But I repeat that there was a malignant circumstantial conspiracy on foot against me: it was plotted and completed a thousand years ago. It was ripe before either of us was born. In fact, I was a minor incident in the whole thing. No, no, I am not vindictive, not even plaintive about it. I have already told you why.

"Let me see, how did it come about? Yes, I have it! It started with the very first note in Wieniawsky's 'Légende.' But let me be a little more precise. We met at a concert, she and I. She was alone, and my friend absurdly lost me after I had got into conversation with her: it was a splendid opportunity for a talk—and what did we talk of? Why, of good old times. To be exact, there weren't very many good old times to be talked about, but one has to talk about good old times in meetings of this description, and talk of them we did, with passionate enthusiasm. That was chiefly during an interval. The last piece on the program was the one I have mentioned. He was a fiendishly good violinist, the man who played it, and I repeat that with the very first note the curtain went up on the last act of our little farce.

"Now there is not a piece of music to vie with the 'Légende' for pure romance. Its opening is as the sound of a wind that brings from the buried past the strange, sweet odor of an eastern tragedy. The man who hears that piece of music, and cannot fall in love with the woman by his side, is utterly soulless. I say that as a great truth, and I add in

self-defence that I was essentially a man with a soul.

"We left the concert hall in a kind of dream. The idea of taking a taxi home was as far from my mind as the precept of Solomon the wise apropos of the 'young man void of understanding' against seeing a young lady 'the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening.'

"We walked along almost silently. That was deadly, and I knew it, but something consistently prevented me from talking, and at no juncture had I ever been in greater need of the protection of talk.

"To have sat out a play, or a piece of music with a woman gives you a kinship with her. You have both lived out a little life together: with me this feeling was acute on all such occasions; in this instance it was overwhelming.

"You must not think, however, that I was altogether so analytical then, for I was a Young Man in those days. There was Romance in the air, Love, Beauty, Mystery. I was not loth to give myself up to these in one abandoned orgy of tenderness, be the price what might. The evening was calm and beautiful; a lovely half-moon hung in the south, brightening as the twilight deepened. I walked as on air: somehow her arm was in mine, though how this should have come to be is beyond me still.

"Mechanically we passed her house. It stood in a quiet lane which was lined by slender birches. The leaves of autumn were thick under foot, and made a pleasant crackling noise as we passed over them. My emotion seemed to swell and richen with every step we took.

"At the end of the lane there was a little forest. The moonlight, purified and etherealized in its passage through the twilight, turned the little forest into an enchanted fairy ground. As tacitly as we had passed her house we now sat down in this little place on a leveled tree.

"We spoke in little, detached sentences, few and far between. What we

said was light, but there was no laughter in our voices. We felt the solemn shadow preceding a great event, and we could not but become solemnized and attuned to it.

"The tenseness of the situation increased from moment to moment. Here was a wood in late twilight. Here was the wind waking mournful melodies in the Aeolian harps of the trees. Here was the moonlight over all, and the stars beginning to break through. Here was a Young Woman, and here was a Young Man. What follows?

"This was the time, this was the place, these were the circumstances. Could I be so unobliging, so unamenable?

"Suppose that you were taking part in a very complicated but very beautiful dance in which not eight or ten, but a thousand, dancers were participating. Suppose that all was going smoothly, harmoniously, and that the intricate figures were working themselves out in a flawless rhythm. Suppose that the moment arrived when you became, as it were, the very pivot of the crowning movement, the axle of the last and most beautiful revolution. Could you, for some private, and peculiar reason, refuse to move? Could you, for your individual and selfish satisfaction, shatter the whole of the glorious construction? There are many factors militating against you. You cannot, in the first place, slight every one of these thousand perfect dancers, for you have not the colossal impudence. In the second place, you do not wish it to be thought that your failure to respond was due to ignorance: you want everyone to know that you did know what the proper thing was. And how can you make them realize this save by doing it? Last, and if least, by no means unimportant, the joy and spirit of the dance impel you to move. The rhythmic motion has made you drunk: you would sell your soul to complete the dance. You cannot sacrifice this voluptuous sensation even under the certain penalty of eternal damnation: and, coldly though I tell all this now, the joy of

that dance is still beyond all description.

"Up to a certain point, then, I was the passive element: the rest of the dance, in which the moon, the twilight, the stars, the wind, every tree, and branch, and twig participated, moved on with slow and stately grace to the splendid finale. The finale drew near. I knew my part to the very tremor in my voice—I knew it to the tip of her fingers. Not to have acted then would have been an unutterable affront to every element; nay, would have been an affront to eternity itself, for had not all eternity prepared this dance? And O! the delirious joy of the dance! My heart began to beat rapidly, my blood to move faster. Such an intoxication you can drink in with neither wine, nor opium, nor hashish, 'nor all the drowsy perfumes of the east.'

"Verily, recalling that moment in all its detail, methinks I did as well. Why wait? Why delay? I do not think that a finer opportunity would ever have presented itself; and to have given up the ghost on a meaner occasion than this, and give up the ghost a man must, would have been truly cruel. Let me be grateful that for one hour I have had the joy and glory of the lover in unsurpassable surroundings.

"You can see for yourself that the completion of the picture demanded that we should be in each other's arms,

breathing almost inaudible words of ineffable tenderness. I do believe that at one moment a piercing lucidity of thought almost shattered the whole affair, but it passed, and, as it were with one last despairing cry, I gave myself up to the delirium of the game.

"The moment arrived for me to declare, in broken tones, that I had loved her since I had first set eyes on her: that life without her would be pointless, garish, hollow: that she would be the crown of my life, its guide, its ruling passion. . . .

"Years after she confessed that she accepted me for the sake of the situation."

Here the Cynic deposited the remains of his cigar in the silver ash tray by his side, and relapsed into a thoughtful silence. In the heart of the Young Man were wild anger, and contempt, and resentment, but there was never a word to answer it all.

When the Young Man got to the other side of the door he paused as if in a daze, and then drew slowly from his breast pocket an elaborately mounted photograph. He looked at it long, as if he had never seen it properly before, and slowly a smile of reassurance lit up his face. He pressed his lips to the photograph in a sudden passion of tenderness.



POSSESSION is nine points of the law. This is the only reason why so many men keep their wives.



NO matter how good a man may be there is always one woman who can find something bad in him.



A WOMAN will often confess her sins, but there is no record of one ever having confessed her faults.

THE SINGING GIRL

By Jean White

LITTLE Miss Wa Mai, very appropriately named The Thrush, is a singing slave girl in a Chai of New York's Chinatown in Pell Street. She is not as beautiful as some of the girls, but she knows more of the songs of old China than the others, and her reputation for wit and cleverness is unusual.

Outside the house where Wa Mai lives there is a very picturesque sign, red, with black and gold letters. Artists have often drawn that small, paneled door, with its rag of paper, with such gorgeous coloring, but what it says would not be polite to repeat. It advertises the character of the house.

Inside, there is a small, square room, where a red and yellow wall banner begs the favor of the Earth god—the god who has nothing to do but live under the house and favor its inmates. Beneath the idol shrine, where a squat godling blinks placidly, a vase holds sand, in which there are always some sticks of sweet punk. A tiny bowl with a taper floating in it illumines the room, where you must stand and wait while the lookout inspects you from her peephole behind the shrine.

Wa Mai is much in demand, despite the fact that she is not pretty. Last year one of the Tongs spent hundreds of dollars for her services, throughout a week of a special celebration. She sang and played for them through all of the six nights, played the queer little *young kum* with bits of bamboo that drew from the slender strings a volume of sound out of all proportion to the instrument. And all the while her spicy little tongue threw the ball of conversation back and forth with the

readiness of a good tennis player who has a special serve, while the great men of her world hung upon her words and paid her high-flown compliments. For at a Chinese banquet there are never any of the wives and sisters of the men. It is the Sing Song girls, from the Chais, who must make the social atmosphere, and their witticisms, sweet voices and pleasant personalities are valued quite as highly as their mere bodily charms. In fact, it would be difficult for a Caucasian to understand the part which The Thrush and others like her play in Chinese life. She is Society and Romance, Wit and Poetry, as well as Vice and Degeneracy.

Wa Mai is not over sixteen, and she is as modest and dainty and sweet as one of the fairy butterflies embroidered on her long coat might be. With her slim hands, she makes the most charming little gestures, that cause all her jade bracelets to clink gently. When she is really dressed up her trousers are of the faintest pink, embroidered with gold, and her pearl headdress is heavy with uncut stones. In her own room, though, when just the habitués of the place are there, she trots about in blue cotton trousers, finished off by a little short coat. Her small, bare feet she thrusts into heelless slippers, with an embroidered strap for the toes, and before the hairdresser comes, often she lets her heavy hair hang all around her odd little face.

That was the way she was usually dressed when I went there to give her her English lesson, about two o'clock of an afternoon, when the life of Chinatown is at its lowest ebb, and all the girls in the Chais are taking their ease.

Wa Mai is a friend of mine. She wants to learn English, for she is extraordinarily ambitious. She wants to go on the vaudeville stage in America, and her voice and personality are both so very exceptional that I have encouraged her in the desire. Meanwhile, she occasionally makes an "extra" number at a famous uptown restaurant, and thus adds to the tidy sum with which she plans to buy herself free.

I had just finished Wa Mai's lesson, which consisted of "There's a Girl in the Heart of Maryland." She sang it with really great success, her tones as clear and full as that of any white singer. This is remarkable, for the Chinese voice is almost invariably more or less of a falsetto.

After the lesson, Wa Mai ran out into the corridor, for the young man who brings the reports of the daily lottery drawings had come into the house. He is a queueless young man with a perfect command of English, and flawless diamonds. He followed Wa Mai back into her room, with his hands full of small squares of brown paper, one of which the girl took, prettily excusing herself to me. Then she gave a little squeal of delight, for she had won ten dollars. The young man told me that she nearly always won, and that many of the girls got her to draw for them, she is so lucky. The lottery in Chinatown is as much a part of the day's routine as the evening rice; so Wa Mai chose a ticket for the next day, and then turned to me, as the young man passed on to the room of Mai Yuk.

"Miss Teacher," she said, with the caressing intonation which she never fails to give my official title among the Chinese, "I t'ink I sing 'at song pretty good—don't you? Now I sing you one Chinese song—v'ry different. You listen."

Back at the inlaid table, with the queer little instrument propped against its lacquered case, she grew serious. There are so many beautiful Chinese songs that it is always difficult to choose. But at last The Thrush made

her decision. The two little paddles of bamboo flew over the strings, and the sweet, thin notes of the *kum* tinkled out an accompaniment to the most famous song of the Singing Girls, the Sin Fa, or Song of the Lily.

This is a very tragic song, as all Chinese love songs are. It tells of the sacred lily, which blooms only at New Year's, and is considered a symbol of good luck if it blossoms. This is the same flower that you see in all of the Chinese laundries and shops, growing in brown bowls of sand and water. The story is that it first sprang from the faithful heart of a girl who drowned herself for love.

Oh, flower of the water lily,
Hear, oh hear my prayer!
Bend to me thine listening ear.
I am weary—
Life is so dreary—
Tell me—Is the stream that bears thee, kind?
If on its bosom I should die,
If 'neath its water I should lie,
Would I there my lover find?
Fairy flower! Thy perfume sweet
Borne to me by the evening breeze
Shows me dying at thy feet!
Cease, sad heart, no longer beat.
Weary spirit, rest at ease.

Wa Mai played the air through, once, then her face set, and became perfectly expressionless, which is the proper thing when a Chinese song is sung. With hardly a motion of her reddened lips, in a voice so high, so piercingly sweet, so deadly level, that it might have been the wail of an unborn soul, Wa Mai sang of the planting and the growing, the decay and the garnering of the water lily, with its fatal significance.

As the music penetrated beyond the pale blue and pink and lavender room, the other girls came in to listen. An old man with a long queue, and a young Chinese in American dress lifted the curtain and sat down by the door. There was only the clink of jade bracelets as the girls lit their cigarettes, and the breathing of the water pipe which the old man smoked.

From the song of the water lily The Thrush passed on to the song of the

dying girl who begs her lover to forget his honor, and look upon her before the marriage day. When the song reached the point where the lover, unable to resist longer, goes to her, and begs her never to forget him while she wanders among the dead, the young man went out. As he went, the high, sweet voice implored him not to forget to burn three sticks of incense upon her grave on the fourteenth day of the seventh month—the day when the spirits are uneasy.

Then the old man asked for his favorite song, and forgot to draw on the water pipe as The Thrush swept her paddles across the strings, and began:

Then years of absence—then we meet again.
Meet but to part!

Alas—our youth we cannot renew.

The clouds and shadows vanish,

The leaf falls to the earth.

Like the wild bird I fly to the South,
seeking thee.

In what far blue mountain shall I see thy
face again?

Then the old man, too, went out. His face was working, and his poor old hand trembling. All the girls looked carefully down at their cigarettes, and Wa Mai paused for awhile, her head, with its smooth, glossy bands, resting for awhile on her tiny hand. She is accustomed to the emotion which her songs always evoke, but it always stirs her. In the silence the girls, squatting on bed and floor, their almond eyes looking far away, unblinking, seemed like mythical images, glimpsed in some dark Eastern temple. It mattered not that the hall outside was covered with linoleum, that a telephone instrument was fastened to the wall of the room, that an electric light bulb hung over the high, silk-covered bed, that a package of chewing-gum lay on the inlaid table—the spirit of Asia, the spirit of all things old and unchangeable and sad and fatalistic came creeping down, wrapping us about in a mist as silent and impalpable as fog from the sea.

The magic of the moment was broken by the entrance of the "Grand-mother" of the Chai; the old Ah Poh

who is the guardian and chaperon of the girls. She settled herself with the water pipe that the old man had abandoned, and swept the silent circle with her shining, alert eyes. She is so old that her nose and her chin meet, but the cackle of her voice can bring more animation into the Chai than anything else in the world. She was once a famous beauty and a wit. Her beauty has left no mark, save in the bright spot of color which still stains her wrinkled cheek, but her wit is not lost. Sometimes she goes to the banquets and prompts the pretty girls, who have youth and charm, but not brains.

A running fire of comment broke out as the old woman sat down—quip and quirk, sharp remark and sharper answer—they banded the words about, a mere linguistic play.

"Where is your husband, mother of many?" Mai Yuk opened the game, with the traditional question of the Chais.

Back came the answer from the thin, toothless old lips. "Daughter of a mother, who belonged to every one she met, where is your father? Point him out and I'll point out my husband."

"My father is too lofty a mandarin to show his face in this low quarter. I'll introduce you, though, to my latest adopted maternal relative if you will, in great kindness, turn your bald head to that mirror."

The old woman frowned. She does not like comments on her personal appearance. "Right along the end of my finger," she snarled, holding out a bony digit, "pointing into your face, before your two eyes, runs a curse that will cause you to rot with leprosy before you are a year older!"

It is not often that the old woman utters this direful threat. Wa Mai laughs, but the rest of the girls hastily put their fingers in their ears and beseech her:

"Say it not, say it not, dear mother!"

"Curse me not, sorceress!"

The messenger from the lottery stood in the doorway and smiled genially at the chattering, gesticulating crowd.

"Be peaceful in your heart, great-grandmother of idiots," he remarked cheerfully.

"Get you gone, you simpleton of the wide mouth," the old woman screamed. She had accused him, the week before, of having withheld a prize from her. "Your tongue rattles like dried pease in a dried shell. My blind dog shall bite your heels when you sit on the bed of the oldest, thinnest, ugliest girl in the Chai."

The girls broke into a ripple of sweet laughter, that blew away the coarseness of this latter bit of repartee. They crinkled up their slits of eyes, and spread their full, crimson, dainty mouths over rows of shining teeth, just like young, sweet girls, anywhere. I looked at them with fascinated interest, as I had done a thousand times before. So frail, so tiny, so modest, so mysterious in their calm acceptance of their life, so apparently untouched by it!

As the messenger withdrew, somewhat ruffled by the assignment of the last remark, the old woman who is the official hairdresser of the Chais entered, for it was her afternoon to do Wa Mai's hair. She brought the gossip of the quarter, which she retailed with great volubility, while she did up the long, black hair in the latest combination of twists and knots, smoothing it with aromatic oil and plastering it with cosmetics, which would help to keep it in order till she came again, in a week's time. The old man who had smoked the pipe returned, as she finished, for it was time for Wa Mai to have her lesson from him. He is the music master of the Chais, and was then teaching the girl the most difficult of the old songs, one which no Singing Girl in this country knows. It will take her two months to learn it, in all its stilted perfection. Note by note, her clear, pure voice repeated the high, falsetto notes after him, while I sat at the in-laid table, pretending to read one of the Chinese story-books which come in cheap paper editions, but in reality listening to the sounds in the house.

There was, first of all, and incessant,

the "slip-slip-slip-slip" of feet in Chinese bamboo shoes. Then an occasional burst of laughter from the rooms, to which the girls had retired, or the voice of Ah Poh as she moved around the room, just off the square entrance where the peephole is, hurrying her domestic slave in the preparation of the evening meal of pork, rice, fish, and the hot, biting wine in which the girls toast each other before they eat. The smell of the cooking came up the corridor and mingled with the spicy odor of cosmetics and sandalwood which is always so strong in the Chais.

The music lesson was interrupted when the Ah Tau of a Chai Mutual Loan Association called to collect her thrice-monthly dues. The head of such an association is a very important person, for she has charge of the finances of at least thirty girls, who pay in, say, ten dollars each, three times a month. This sum is loaned, as it accrues, to the girls who will pay the highest interest, and is, in turn, loaned out at a yet higher rate. Sometimes a girl from another association will be the borrower, sometimes a young man who wants to go into business for himself, sometimes the owners of the girls, themselves.

Wa Mai was very busy for a few minutes, as she had borrowed the money for that month, and had to settle what rate of interest she was to pay. (This interest, you see, would, in turn, be put back into the association, so that the sum is a constantly increasing one.) With the money The Thrush had secured the jewelry of an unfortunate girl who had contracted consumption and was going back to China to die. It consisted of uncut diamonds and jade bracelets, worth far more money than the girl had sold them for, so it was a good investment, for Wa Mai would ultimately sell them again, at a profit.

It was time for me to go, but still I sat on, absorbed in this alien life, yet one which I was beginning to understand, as I taught and doctored and helped among these girls of the Chais. Among them, none appeal to me more than Wa Mai. She is so independent,

so thrifty, so determined to win her way to freedom. She is the friend and confidante of all the other girls, and my friend, too, I think, although between us there lies the veil of the brown race, and its strange, unfathomable ideals.

I was not surprised to see Kum Heung, from Chinatown's other Chai, come trotting in, as the afternoon waned, for she was new to this country, and all the new girls turn to Wa Mai. She sat down very close to her friend, looking pale, I thought. I rose to go, believing that the girls would like to be alone together, but Wa Mai recalled me, with the fluttering of the fingers which begs and commands at the same time.

"You stay, Miss Teacher," she implored. "I like very much you stay."

Kum Heung, who is rightly named Golden Fragrance, so dainty and sweet she is, does not understand English, so I spoke to her in her own tongue.

"Why is your mouth sad, Golden Fragrance?" I asked.

The girl shook her head stubbornly, but in contradiction to that gesture she laid her soft little hand in mine, while her eyes, made strange by their heavily pencilled eyebrows and lashes, looked through and beyond me. Her appearance was so alarming that I turned to Wa Mai, with a question in my eyes. The girl answered it as if I had spoken.

"Miss Teacher, please, I t'ink we just sit with Kum Heung a little piece."

Golden Fragrance swallowed a sob. Her hand, lying in mine, was cold as a stone, and every minute or two a convulsive shudder ran through her. I moved over to the bed, where the girls were sitting, and put an arm around her, meeting and locking with Wa Mai's, and the little thing relaxed between us with the long drawn sigh of a tired child. Wa Mai persistently looked away from me, as we sat there, so after a few minutes I concluded that poor little Golden Fragrance had some trouble about which she could not speak, and that Wa Mai thought she needed just the silent sympathy which

our friendly arms could give her.

It grew late. Mai Yuk and all the beauties of the Chai trooped past the door, going to the evening meal, but Wa Mai called out that she would come later. I arose and lit the taper which floated in a bowl of oil. The electric light was never used except when Wa Mai wished to receive a visitor with ceremony. The dim light spread a pleasant glow over the small, clean, pretty room, not so fine as Lin Fa's nor Mai Yuk's, but well kept and silk hung. The light heightened the beauty of the two girls, who sat so close together. Wa Mai was holding Kum Heung tenderly, looking down on the younger, frailer girl with an expression which I could not understand.

The two olive cheeks were laid softly against each other, and the small, dimpled hands were interlocked. Despite my familiarity with the life of the Chais, my eyes filled with tears, as they so often did. So pretty, so modest, so sweet and unselfish toward each other—and again, as I was always doing, I asked myself how the thing could be.

The young man in the American clothes slipped in, as I stood there, and sat down quietly by the door. He looked at the two girls with his oblique, impenetrable eyes. I thought he seemed almost as pale as Kum Heung. One of his long, thin hands, laid lightly on the other, twitched occasionally, but he did not speak or move as Wa Mai gently drew away from little Golden Fragrance, touched her cheek lovingly and laid her down, still sleeping. The young man slowly rose and went over to the bed, beside which he stood, looking down at the girl.

Something still and breathless in the air of the room touched my nerves, and I walked over to the still little figure and laid my hand against her cheek. It was almost cold.

The shock of it made me reel against Wa Mai, who steadied me with her strong little arm.

"When did you know?" I asked her, in a whisper.

"I knew before, but when I put my

arm around her it was almost finished. I could tell by the tremors running all over her body."

"But why didn't you say something, Wa Mai? Good Heavens, we might have saved her!"

"No, Miss Teacher, it was then too late. Besides, it is impious to interfere with those who wish to die."

We were talking in Chinese, but the young man did not seem to hear us. He looked and looked, with his impenetrable eyes, at the sweet oval of a face, lying on the reed mat of Wa Mai's bed, the mysterious smile of the newly dead upon its painted lips. There was a little black stain on the lower one.

"Opium ashes?" I questioned.

"Yes."

"Why, Wa Mai, why?"

"Kum Heung loved him," the girl whispered, looking at the young man, "but he is very poor. He is the nephew of Ah Poh and has nothing, and Golden Fragrance was held very high, for she was a new girl, and pretty and young. To-day, she was sold to Wong Hin, who is old and horrible.

He wanted her for himself, too. So—"

The fatalistic, constant gesture of the Chinese ended the explanation; the ghost of a shrug, which lifts mouth and nostrils and eyebrows, like a ripple. The young man turned and went out, walking like an automaton; only his hand, hanging at his side, continued to twitch.

"Did he know?" I asked.

"Yes. She sent him word that she would come here, to me, to die. Wong Hin will be very angry."

Out in the eating room the girls were singing snatches of their weird songs. Wa Mai began to sing with them, as she straightened the slim arms of Golden Fragrance; of little Golden Fragrance, who had known nothing but how to die for love. Wa Mai's voice, clear and true, wailed up above the other girls' as she smoothed the black hair of her friend, her face a mask which showed neither fear nor sorrow nor joy, nor any emotion of the human heart. And I was afraid—afraid! I went out quickly, out to the streets.



FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By John Martin Hammond

THOU know'st that in our garden, Sweet,
Distrust hath raised its head;
'And, now, I would but ask of thee,
Are all of our flowers dead?

Oh, whence did come the evil seed,—
What fateful wind did blow?
A hateful weed hath filled the place
Where flowers sweet did grow!



QUI ?

By Jacques Nayral

ON le voyait sur le boulevard, entre deux heures de l'après-midi et deux heures du matin.

Ses vêtements, ni vieux ni neufs, juste assez déformés pour épouser mollement tous ses gestes, sa barbe, toujours faite de la veille, son linge dont la fraîcheur avait deux tours de cadran, un fort gourdin, pendu à son poignet droit, et qui scandait, avec un peu de retard, sa marche à demi hâtée, lui composaient un aspect immuable.

Il vous abordait, trois doigts de sa dextre pointant vers votre épigastre, la main gauche effleurant le bord luisant du chapeau :

— Bonjour, cher, comment va ?

Et bientôt :

— Excusez-moi. Je viens du Napolitain, je me sauve.

Ou bien :

— Je vous demande pardon. Je vais au Cardinal.

Ou encore :

— Je vous quitte. Je sors du Zimmer et on m'attend à la Paix.

Plus souvent, il avait une histoire à conter, une histoire—ô joie!—brève, mais, à son sens, superlativement—hélas!—cocasse, à moins qu'elle ne fût adorablement—horreur!—parisienne.

Quelles étaient ces histoires ? Je ne me souviens précisément d'aucune. On eût dit de l'Aurélien Scholl revu par un plongeur, de l'Armand Silvestre interprété par le garçon du billard, du Courteline remanié par les champions du jacquet. Le préambule était invariable :

— Mon cher, il faut que je vous en raconte une. J'étais tout à l'heure au Pousset. . . .

Suivait le récit jusqu'à cette immuable conclusion :

— Elle est bien bonne, hein ? Excusez, je file jusqu'au Tourtel.

Il se permettait des mots, rarement, et tous présentaient ce caractère commun qu'ils paraissaient avoir fait leur tour de France dans la marmotte d'un voyageur en liquides. Toutes les métaphores, originales ou rebattues, qu'il employait, étaient, du reste, inévitablement tirées de l'ordre du Digestif et du Potable.

Son approbation s'exprimait ainsi :

— Bravo ! Bien tiré, sans faux-col.

Sa mésestime :

— C'est de la petite bière.

Un jour, il me dit :

— Un tel, mais c'est un homme tellement ignorant qu'il prendrait le duodenum pour un morceau de musique.

Une autre fois, admirant la facilité d'un polygraphe :

— Cet homme-là, il vous torche un article sur n'importe quoi comme on avale un bock.

Avait-il une famille, une femme, des enfants ? Mystère. Ses relations, en revanche, paraissaient fort étendues ; il connaissait quiconque avait, une fois, mis le pied dans un café. D'où ces phrases :

— Chose, parfaitement, je l'ai vu un soir au Royal. Machin ? Oui, oui, celui qui joue le piquet au Pont-de-Fer. Tartempion, je sais ; il est tous les soirs à l'apéro au Madrid. Lambert ? Je ne le vois plus ; voilà deux ans qu'il a lâché le Cardinal.

Où logeait-il ? Mystère, encore. Quelle direction qu'il suivit, onques ne l'ouïs je dire :

— Je sors de chez moi ; je rentre chez moi.

Mais :

—Quel froid. Je suis gelé! Brr! Ils ne font jamais de feu dans cette sacrée brasserie.

En été:

—Ouf! Quelle chaleur. Je vais au café Pétard. Une terrasse épatante, mon cher, le seul endroit de Paris où l'on respire.

Durant vingt ans, je ne l'ai jamais rencontré ailleurs que sur le boulevard. Peut-être y couchait-il, au fond de quelque arrière-salle de café. Il connaissait pourtant, à sa manière, la topographie de la capitale, et des points de repère l'aidaient à d'inattendues précisions.

—L'Hôtel de Ville? Suivez la rue de Rivoli, tout droit; c'est en face le Café de la Garde Nationale. Le Conseil d'Etat? Je sais, je sais: le café de Rohan fait le coin de la place. La rue des Minimes, je ne connais que ça; il y a au coin un petit café où l'on joue encore au pharaon. La colonne de Juillet, juste en face la Brasserie du Canon.

Il se promenait sans embarras, pareillement orienté, dans l'histoire littéraire et dans celle des nations. Il distinguait, parmi les premiers rôles de la Révolution, les clients du café Foy, ceux du Caveau, du café Corazza, de la Cave de Février. Musset était un habitué de Tortoni; Piron, Beaumarchais, Voltaire, des clients du Procope; Boileau, Lafontaine, des buveurs illustres de la Pomme de Pin. Il connaissait mal Cicéron,

mais déduisait des on-dit que ce bavard célèbre avait dû être un fidèle de la buvette du Palais.

Une fois, obsédé, comme tous mes contemporains, par la guerre des Balkans et la fameuse tension austro-russe, je lui demandai machinalement:

—Eh bien! avez-vous lu les nouvelles viennoises?

—Mon cher, répondit-il, j'ignore tout: il y a six semaines que je n'ai pris un bock au Viennois.

Il est mort, hier, d'un accident. Il traversait la chaussée quand une voiture le renversa et lui passa sur le corps. On le porta dans une pharmacie. Ranimé pour quelques secondes:

—Je la trouve dure à avaler, celle-là, gémit-il.

Et comme l'inévitable agent, le calepin à la main, lui posait des questions:

—Je sortais du café des Princes, commença-t-il.

Mais un hoquet l'arrêta: Il était mort.

Où allait-il quand il quittait un café? D'où venait-il quand il allait au café? Cruelle énigme!

Mort, on le fouilla. Dans son portefeuille, rien, que des cartes de visite avec ce nom: Justin Durand; pas d'adresse, simplement un numéro de téléphone. On s'informa: c'était le numéro d'une brasserie où le défunt s'identifiait ainsi: le monsieur Durand qui déjeune à l'as.



ALL the world's a stage, and life is a dull, dull farce. However, let us not repine. There is still plenty of time between the acts to go out and take a drink.



MAKERS of noise: *a*, empty barrels; *b*, those who have emptied them.



RETROSPECTIVELY

By George Jean Nathan

THE critic who complains that it has been a bad theatrical season is equally a bad critic. There is no such thing as a bad theatrical season. There is, true, such a thing as a bad managerial season and there is, indeed, such a thing as a bad theatergoing season, but, patently, these are not one with such a thing as a bad theatrical season. If a haberdasher opens up a kiosk and displays for sale therein nothing but mauve gabardine neckties with elephant's-breath polka-dots and at the end of the year announces emphatically that it has been a bad season for neckties, the laugh is on the haberdasher. And quite possibly on the few misguided souls who have gone in for the haberdasher's especial species of neck boa. But certainly not on the season.

It is the same with the theater. The fact is, that the worse a theatrical season has been from the bulked standpoint of producer and public, the better that season has been from the standpoint of the separative critic. Nothing vouches so strongly for the prudent and reflective critic's ability as an unsuccessful dramatic semester. Such an era attests to the verity of the arguments such a critic has set forth. It offers, in his behalf, incontrovertible proofs that he has been right and that the producers and their suite have been wrong. It eloquently and brilliantly transforms the critic's "flippant sarcasm" into what is suddenly beheld to be surprising sense. And it demonstrates with not a little engine-power the accuracy of the theory that, after all, the umpire may know almost as much about baseball as the player who has just struck out. But of all this, old dear, anon.

Our initial duty, pursuant to annual custom, is to record in this place an idea of those new plays—or plays at least new to the metropolitan stage—which appear to merit the leading positions in the season's survey. It has been the tradition to name the ten best plays in the order of their relative lustre. This year, however, after considerable exercitation, I may persuade myself to set down but seven. And, even so, for the sixth and seventh specimens so placed, I admit to having small sound critical justification. According to my personal obliquities, therefore, I submit the following as the best dramatic plays of the New York season of 1914-1915:

1. "Androcles and the Lion" (*Shaw*).
2. "The Song of Songs" (*Sheldon and Sudermann*).
3. "The Phantom Rival" (*Molnar*).
4. "The Doctor's Dilemma" (*Shaw*).
5. "Pygmalion" (*Shaw*).
6. "Consequences" (*Rubinstein*).
7. "Outcast" (*Chambers*).

The season's two best farces, in the order named:

1. "It Pays to Advertise" (*Megrue and Hackett*).
2. "The Show Shop" (*Forbes*).

The season's best melodrama:

1. "On Trial" (*Reizenstein*).

The season's two best one-act plays, in the order named:

1. "The Glittering Gate" (*Dunsany*).
2. "The Dumb and the Blind" (*Chapin*).

The ten best performances by unstarred or unfeatured actresses, in the relative order of their pretension:

1. Irene Fenwick ("The Song of Songs").
2. Mathilde Cottrelly ("The Bubble").
3. Maude Hanaford ("The Bludgeon").

4. Violet Heming ("*A Modern Girl*" and "*The Lie*").
5. Marjorie Rambeau ("*So Much for So Much*").
6. Vivian Tobin ("*Alice in Wonderland*").
7. Rita Jolivet ("*What It Means to a Woman*").
8. Laura Hope Crews ("*The Phantom Rival*").
9. Julia Walcott ("*So Much for So Much*").
10. Annie Mack Berlein ("*Kick In*").

Similarly, the ten best performances by unstarred or unfeatured males:

1. Thomas A. Wise ("*The Song of Songs*").
2. George Sidney ("*The Show Shop*").
3. Kenneth Douglas ("*A Pair of Silk Stockings*").
4. O. P. Heggie ("*Androcles and the Lion*," etc.).
5. Herbert Yost ("*The Marriage of Columbine*" and "*The Clever Ones*").
6. Montague Love ("*The Adventure of Lady Ursula*").
7. Conway Tearle ("*The Hawk*").
8. Jerome Patrick ("*What Is Love*" and "*Marie-Odile*").
9. John Milner ("*Innocent*").
10. William Boyd ("*Beverly's Balance*").

My preface concerned itself with the belief that an inauspicious theatrical season emphasizes the discernment, and substantiates to a degree the fortune-telling, of the balanced critic. Without making vulgar pretence or aspiring impolitically to so gaudy a title, may I at least ogle with some possibly ill-mannered, but somehow peculiarly cognate, excerpts from my Collected Works, covering the corresponding theatrical period? These soupçons of wisdom, perused again in retrospection, may—or may not—in a left-handed manner explain

Why the season was a stupid season.

1. The native spine is tickled into a condition of trembling awe only by the sudden switching out of a chandelier, the shooting off of a blank cartridge and the spectacle of a twenty-dollar-a-week actor in a policeman's uniform. That spine, on the other hand, which hopes in the American theater to be thrilled by the delicate humour of a Schnitzler, the quick satire of a Thoma or Fulda, the fancy of a Rittner or Ettlinger, the

sharp wit of a Rip and Bousquet . . . is a spine destined to a hopeless dream.

2. If we were to judge the relations of men and women and the bearing of such relations upon the processes of life from the American adaptations of French plays, we would have to believe that babies were the result of kissing.

3. Stars may be divided into two classes: those who are loved by the public and those who are loved by the manager.

4. Drama—the erroneous theory that the most important episodes in a man's or a woman's life are the most interesting.

5. The arbitrary heroes of the American box-office drama: Jews, husbands, men who never went to college, Western mining engineers, men accused of murder, crooks, Irishmen (if they can sing), army lieutenants and bad painters. The arbitrary heroines: governesses who have been seduced by the son of the family, orphans, single women, married women, grandmothers and mothers.

6. In essaying to imitate Shaw, most playwrights are completely successful in imitating Shaw's garrulity, though considerably less so in imitating the substance of Shaw's garrulity.

7. The Gerry Society—an organization which, by preventing children predisposed to become actors from following their inclination, hopes thereby in time to preserve the drama.

8. Program—A subtle device employed by theatrical managers to persuade an audience to believe that the play it is about to see is going to be acted.

9. The test of all theatrical dramatic art is clothes. If you see a play in the playhouse and somehow believe it to be an authentic specimen of theatrical dramatic art but are not quite sure, shut your eyes and picture the actors and actresses impersonating the characters (which is to say, the characters), stark naked. If, after this, the play remains convincing, it is, in every sense, a good play.

10. All that is necessary to make the ancient triangle drama impressive to the

natives is to inject into it lofty nomenclature (such, for example, as la Comtesse Marina de Dasetta and le Marquis de Sarleloup), scenes laid in well buttled, tapestry-draped drawing-rooms and allusions to St. Marceaux (vintage of '97) and the Ritz Hotel.

11. Among critics there exists a legend that so long as a dramatist is sincere, it is meet that, however bad his productions, he be treated with a soft and sweet consideration. As a matter of fact, your true artist is seldom, if ever, sincere; for he realizes that to write only what he believes is to confess his pettiness, narrowness and his inflexible limitations.

12. It is deplored by some critics that George M. Cohan adheres in his plays to the vulgar atmosphere of Broadway. And yet these are the same critics who most emphatically endorse some British Cohan for sticking to the equally brash, equally local, equally in itself sordid, commonplace and vulgar Manchester.

13. Every once in so often some of our managers, playwrights, and actors detonate with objection to what they designate as the "clever" school of dramatic criticism—clever, in their vocabulary, standing for a description of such dramatic criticism as endeavors to be readable and amusing. It is the contention of these persons that dramatic criticism should concern itself impersonally with the subject up for criticism, and should not attempt to be of itself entertaining. Well, well, what do they want, these odd persons? I'll tell you. They want a school of dramatic criticism which, by its own dullness, will, in comparison, celebrate *their* mediocrity. As a matter of fact, dramatic criticism, certainly here in New York, must be divertingly humorous, merry, and witty. *Somebody's* got to supply the amusement for the theater-going public!

14. Theatrical manager: artist:: artist's model: artist.*

15. Suspense—A sensation of extreme

nervous excitement which an American audience is ordered to feel for the future fate of two characters who, the audience knows perfectly, will be found safely and happily in each other's arms at eleven o'clock.

16. Farce, as we get it in our theaters, is based largely on the theory that it is awfully funny to be caught in another man's wife's bedroom.

17. Speculator—one who sells a two-dollar theater ticket for fifty cents above the regulation price, thus robbing the purchaser of two dollars and fifty cents.

18. Dramatic critic—one who is less concerned in reviewing the impression a play makes upon him than in reviewing the impression *he* makes on the play.

19. It would appear to be the current notion of our newspaper proprietors that the theater (and hence the advertising columns) will be financially benefitted through compelling the newspaper reviewers to discharge themselves of a copious praise, and nothing but praise, upon the event of each and every new theatrical production. And yet, who have made the most money: the theatrical figures whom the newspaper critics have habitually vaselined or those whom these same critics have spoofed? George M. Cohan made over half a million dollars in the full face of the low guying that was visited upon him by the newspaper boys in the days when he shouted slang loudest and waved a flag most wildly. George Tyler, anointed regularly by the newspaper boys with sauce Melba, not long ago was adjudged a bankrupt. Harry Von Tilzer last year backed a play which was vigorously—and truthfully—denounced by the gazetteers as rubbish, and Harry Von Tilzer's right pants' pocket now bulges with bills. Who has the bigger bank account, Mrs. Fiske (who is consistently smeared with caramel juice by the critical boys), or Billie Burke (who more often has come in, and properly, for the critical wallop)? A. H. Woods made a fortune out of "The Girl From Rector's," which the greelys tried to laugh out of court, and lost a fortune on "Gypsy Love," which they treated most

* Ninety years old.

magnanimously—which, indeed, they went so far as to hail as a fine example of operetta art when it was nothing of the sort—and they knew it. The newspaper proprietors, in brief, are killing the box-office with kindness. They are killing the golden egg that laid the goose.

20. Theatrically speaking, an Englishman is a subject of King George; an American, a predicate.

21. Psychology—a word used by kind-hearted critics in an attempt to render clear the unintelligible portions of bad plays produced by good friends.

22. In the theater, a hero is one who believes that all women are ladies. A villain one who believes that all ladies are women.

23. One reason why the galleries of our theaters (as the theatrical managers lament) are no longer filled, as they were fifteen years ago, with newsboys is that all the newsboys are now theatrical managers.

24. Fifteen or twenty years ago, pictures of actors and actresses were given away with packages of cigarettes and smoking tobacco. To-day, they are given away with packages of chocolate bonbons. Just what this proves is not altogether clear to me. But somewhere in it I detect a suspicion of something which seems to hint rather subtly at the emasculation and effeminizing of the American theater.

25. If, as many of our so-called constructive critics maintain, it is true that our realistic American drama is largely successful in holding the mirror up to nature, it must follow as a logical corollary that all the important events in our national life occur in the libraries of private houses and that, whatever their nature, they are always attended by love interest, comic relief and a display of the latest styles in women's gowns.

26. According to the American theater, it is customary in real life for two persons, when speaking to each other, always to stand side by side and direct their remarks to the front wall of the room. According to the American the-

ater, it is also customary in real life for two or more persons, when engaged in a normal conversation, however brief, never to remain seated in their chairs but at periodic intervals to rise, cross the room, walk around the piano, linger at the mantel, cross back and then reseat themselves.

27. Our critics, when they speak of dramatic action, habitually confound such action with mere physical motion.

28. Advanced vaudeville—the theory that dill pickles, whiskers, big stomachs, pancake derbies and William Jennings Bryan are funnier than dill pickles, whiskers, big stomachs, pancake derbies and Cassie Chadwick.

29. Almost all comedy is based on the fact that a man will do anything for the woman he loves. So is almost all tragedy.

30. It would seem to be a tradition of our theater that either amateurs or Arnold Daly must finally be entrusted with introducing to the American public all the really worth-while dramatists.

31. The difference twixt a risqué American farce and a risqué French farce is simply this: in the former the plot proceeds *toward* adultery; in the latter the plot proceeds *from* adultery.

32. There are two schools of dramatic critics: those who know George Bernard Shaw is the greatest living playwright and admit it, and those who know George Bernard Shaw is the greatest living playwright and deny it.

33. Nine vaudeville acts out of every ten are based upon the theory that an average human being's capacity for acute suffering is limited to about twenty minutes. The tenth act, on the other hand, is based upon the theory that average human beings do not attend vaudeville shows, and that, as a consequence, vaudeville audiences are abnormal, and hence able to endure exquisite pain for at least half an hour. The tenth act is, therefore, known in vaudeville circles as a headliner.

34. The trouble with most of the villains in our native drama is that they are heroes. Every now and then I discover that, by closing my eyes and con-

sidering the villain of the piece in the place of the hero and vice versa, with their speeches analogously changed about, I am enabled to enjoy the play and its thematic evolution intelligently and satisfactorily.

35. The headmost objection to the Manchester and some of the other schools of so-called realistic drama lies in the circumstance that they reproduce life so precisely that they are correspondingly tedious.

36. For such persons as care no longer for Shakespeare in the theater, there is in the main usually no safer refuge than a modern Shakespearean theatrical production.

37. It is the prescription of a large parcel of our theatrical reviewers habitually to mistake a deep male speaking voice for acting ability; veracity for vulgarity; all audible or visible hysteria (such as bosom-heaving, fist-clenching and nose-blowing) for emotion; age for experience; merely terse dialogue for dramatic dialogue; and a sad play for a serious play.

38. The task of the musical comedy composer is a difficult one. He has to write music that will make an audience forget the librettist's lines. The task of the librettist is not less difficult. He has to write lines that will make an audience forget the composer's music. Both usually fail. And where they do not fail, the producer generally picks out an awful looking chorus.

39. The American theater and the American drama depended largely upon the following being accepted as inviolable truths: (1) that all persons placed on trial before the law, particularly persons accused of murder, are innocent—and that juries are intelligent; (2) that the accumulation of great wealth inevitably brings with it unhappiness; (3) that melodramatic events occur only in the night-time; (4) that our "wives, sisters and sweet-hearts" care only for stupid plays; and (5) that only comic characters drink beer.

40. Dramatic technique—the art of saying nothing skilfully.

41. Harry B. Smith—the man whom the mother-in-law joke invented.

42. Suspense—the highly nervous sensation which a playwright imparts to his audience when, in the last act of the play, the villain seems momentarily about to escape ultimate punishment at the hero's hands, thus threatening to keep the audience inside the theater for another act.

43. The hero in a play is that character who acts as we would like to act if we were placed in the same situation. The villain of the play is that character who acts as we would actually act if we were placed in the same situation. . . Obviously, this definition does not hold true if the heroine isn't good-looking.

44. Symbolism—the subterfuge of spelling "nonsense" with a capital N.

45. It is one of the peculiarities of the serious theater that it regards the harlot as one of two hard and fast institutions. Either she is an institution for the complete spiritual and physical annihilation of man or she is an institution for his complete spiritual and physical redemption and uplift. It is able to conceive of no less positive effect one way or the other.

46. Spotlight—A theatrical device for assisting audiences to spot bad actors.

47. Mary is a poor working girl. . . Her employer, having read his Sardou carefully, follows tradition, traps Mary in his den and prepares to misterwu her. The rest you know. If the day ever comes that I go to a play of this order and witness a consummation of the business, I shall consider my work in life done and give up dramatic criticism for good and all. And become an actor.

48. One of the chief *divertissements* provided by the quorum of critics is the belief that poetry should be read in one manner and prose in another: that it takes one school of actors to recite verse and another to recite prose. Any actor who is proficient in the recitation of prose is equally proficient in the recitation of verse. The difficulty is

usually not with the prose or the verse, but with the actor.

49. The much ridiculed soliloquy is often a perfectly natural thing. The ridiculing of it is largely the ridicule of tradition. As go most of the plays we see on Broadway, a soliloquy at that is *ipso facto* just half as bad as a dialogue.

50. Burlesque, of the species made popular by such noted impresarios as Sam T. Jack, Al Reeves, Ben Welch and Barney Gerard, owes its popularity and financial success to the theory, accepted by many, that Moulin Rouge pronounced Mulligan's Rug is even more sidesplitting than a fat lady in tights. The basic difference between the form of entertainment classified above under the name of burlesque and two-dollar musical comedy is that all characters representing Frenchmen are in the former called Monsieur Camembert and in the latter Monsieur Roquefort. Otherwise the retort "That ain't a name; that's a cheese" is common to both species.

51. A nation's point of culture is to be estimated—so far as the theater is concerned—in proportion to the respect it does not hold for melodrama.

52. It is the invariable custom of our theatrical appraisers to designate as wholesome any play (1) that is laid in the country and has a rainstorm for a curtain to one of its acts; (2) that contains the spectacle of a little girl at death's door begging her grief-stricken mother not to be sad because "I'm goin' to get well an' strong again, mama; the doctor tol' me so," when the audience has been apprised that there is no hope for the invalid; (3) that contains several touching references to Christmas; or (4) that discloses the fact in the last act that the little heroine is not an illegitimate child after all, her father having duly married her mother before he left on that fatal trip to sea.

53. The nature of the American theatergoer is such that he is quick to view as fact anything that is all fiction and equally quick to deny as at all possible of existence anything that is part fiction.

54. In actual life there is probably not more than one room or one house-yard or one what-not in a hundred in which the persons immediately figuring make use of more than one or two means of ingress and egress. Show me the playwright who utilizes from four to six doors or other entrances and exits and, generally speaking, I will show you a concocter of bad plays.

55. The chief objection to our so-called risqué American sex farces is their lack of vulgarity. Of course, they are sufficiently ill-mannered to pass as comedies of manners with our first-night audiences and they are, in the main, sufficiently gross in their cheapness of wit, humor and intelligence to appeal strongly to such audiences as witty, humorous and intelligent, but their deficiency in the matter of fine, open-hearted, full-throated vulgarity remains markedly offensive to ladies and gentlemen.

56. I have ever contended that, no matter what the moral nature of the rôle or playwright's designation of heroine or villainess or what not, the real heroine, the actually sympathetic and convincing female personage in an acted play is generally that actress who, be she what she may in the dramatic demands of the play, is the best-looking member of the cast.

57. A first-nighter is one who believes that Frank Reicher would be a better actor if he were not such a homely man and that the moon always casts a purple light.

58. Which, in the American theater, is the better known, the more applauded, the more widely and favorably remarked upon: the acting talent of Arnold Daly or the bobbed hair of Mrs. Castle?—the producing aptitude of Winthrop Ames or Valeska Suratt's mole?

59. Adaptation—the theory that it is perfectly safe for a good-looking young married woman to go to a man's bachelor apartment.

60. The local "drama of ideas," of which we read in the newspapers, seems by and large to be grounded on such

irrevocable principles as (1) the idea that the mere thought of one's mother is sufficiently puissant to make one see the error of one's ways and repent; (2) the idea that whenever a villain succeeds in getting hold of a hero's revolver and, subsequently, after taunting the hero, essays to shoot him, the villain is always frustrated through the circumstance that the hero has exercised the precaution either to remove the cartridges or load the gun with blanks; and (3) the idea that the back wall of a tenement room always has some of the plaster missing in the upper left-hand corner.

61. *Amateur Night*—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at most Broadway theaters.

62. The villain in an American play is that character in the play who, were he a real living man, would in all probability decline to associate with the author.

63. A good actor is an actor who is able to interpret with complete naturalness the rôles which he plays. Now, obviously, to be completely natural is not to act. Thus proving to us that there can be no such thing as a good actor.

64. In plays adapted for the American stage, a lady's bedroom may be described as a room in which the audience sleeps.

65. In view of the increasing prevalence of the lazy and detrimental custom of so many of our lady players to permit expensive toilettes to substitute for talent and hard work, I have a suggestion to offer our more sincere and serious producers, a suggestion which—will they carry it out—cannot, I believe, fail in time to improve to a very considerable degree the quality of acting in the native theater. My suggestion: make the ladies rehearse their rôles in the altogether.

66. *Revue*—A burlesque form of theatrical entertainment the success of which depends largely upon its ability to convince its audience that the most serious dramas of the season were perfectly ridiculous. One cannot, re-

member, burlesque successfully the Fifth Symphony, Rembrandt, "Caesar and Cleopatra," Schopenhauer's Essay on Women, the cheese pie at the Hofbräu, or anything else of sound intrinsic worth.

67. To criticize seriously many of the plays presented on Broadway is like carrying Newcastle to coals.

68. *Dinner*—a meal invented for the purpose of getting temporarily not needed characters off the stage.

69. *Sympathy*—A sensation of deep pity which an American theatrical audience is ordered to feel for all married women whose husbands cruelly neglect them between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. in order to earn enough money to support them, and for all additional married women whom the aforesaid husbands visit between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. when *their* husbands have cruelly neglected *them* in order to earn enough money to support them and the unmarried women whom *they* visit between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. In other words, a sensation of heart-moving compassion for everybody but men.

70. At this period in every theatrical season, I make it a practice to remind the public what a damphool it made of itself the season before. It therefore becomes my duty to-day to recall to the theatergoing public that it was just a season ago that it fell hard for the white slave flapdoodle in the drama and became red with indignation when it learned that no young girl was safe from the *saue* Dagoes and Tammany politicians who hid in dark corners of the highways ready to pounce upon their victims and cart them off to houses of shame with barred windows. In the meantime, of course, the public has awakened—as it generally does a year later—to the fact that it merely hoaxed itself with the particular fad of the day, in this instance, the whim-wham of believing that every Swedish immigrant girl, immediately she lauded, was lured into a life of reluctant sin by the cunning arguments of George Probert.

THE PROMETHEUS OF THE WESTERN WORLD

By H. L. Mencken

NO facile blubberer, I assure you, I have yet risen from James Huneker's "NEW COSMOPOLIS" (Scribner) with more tears in these eyes, and wetter ones and bigger ones, than ever a chaplain of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics gave issue to at a forty-hack funeral. The book is sad, affecting, almost tragic. It is written in the key of B minor, *con malinconia*. Gloom hangs over it in opaque, cimmerian, mucilaginous clouds, like the fumes of sulphur, bromine, and molybdenum over Ætna, of selenium, tungsten, and præsodidymium over Krakatoa. Now and then, true enough, a lighter mood intervenes—there are, so to speak, *scherzo*-like episodes, waggish, optimistic, even gay—but always, as in the immortal *scherzo* of Beethoven's Fifth, one hears, down in the bowels of them, the zug-zugging of lugubrious bull-fiddles, the complaining of a sombre and solitary *waldhorn*, the faint, faraway mourning of Loreleis, Valkyries, Giroflé-Giroflas, Elsas, Isolde, *Biermädcl*. It is the play of "Hamlet" in brilliant, voluptuous prose, with the author himself as the Dane. There is in it from end to end, for all its superficial concern with crowds and paving stones, noise and gaudiness, a flavor of old, forgotten, far-off things, of dreams gone a-glimmering, of joys that are no more, alas, alas!

And why not, indeed? To be Huneker in the United States is to be a lonely rock in the illimitable expanses of the Southern Ocean, a sardine in the Sahara, a snow-bird in Hell. The

man is as exotic as a *samovar*, as essentially un-American as a bashi-bazouk, a nose-ring or a fugue. He is filled to the neck with strange and unpatriotic heresies. He ranks Beethoven miles above the Hon. William Jennings Bryan, and not only Beethoven, but also Bach and Brahms, and not only Bach and Brahms, but also Berlioz, Bizet, Bruch and Bülow, and perhaps even Balakirew, Bellini, Balfe, Borodin and Boieldieu. He regards Prague as a more civilized city than Philadelphia, Otto Julius Bierbaum as a greater author than Washington Irving, "Künstler Leben" as better music than "There is Sunlight in My Soul." He knows all that is worth knowing about Chopin, and probably a good deal more than is worth knowing about Czerny, but in all his chapters upon New York there is not a single mention of John McGraw. In the days when the name of Ibsen was as full of blushful impropriety as the word drawers, this Huneker was writing long articles upon him, lavish praises of him. When Nietzsche and the late Herr Most were generally regarded as facets of the same sinister gem, he was expounding the one and rubbing noses with the other. And now, after thirty years of such satanry, he commits his crowning offense against the Republic, his last and worst flouting of the national virtue, by filling a thick book with dithyrambs upon things to eat, hymns to the carnalities of the *aesophagus* and *pylorus*, whoops for Pilsner.

Not, of course, that he is forever at table, *mass* and eating knife before him.

Anon he turns to other concerns—the charm of the Dutch woods, the marble palaces at Newport, the gorgeous pile of buildings on the Hradcany at Prague, the church bells of Belgium, the street cries of Madrid, the bad pictures at Dublin, the immortal dead of Vienna. But these, after all, are merely interludes, digressions—as the tourist advertisements say, side trips. The thread of his narrative is a thread of nutriment. His philosophizing always comes back, however far it may roam, to such ease as a man finds in his inn. "The stomach of Vienna," he says, "first interested me, not its soul." And so, after a dutiful bow to St. Stephen's ("Old Steffel," as the Viennese call it), he proceeds to investigate the paprika-chicken, the *gulyas*, the *risi-bisi*, the *apfelstrudel*, the *kaiserschmarn* and the native and authentic *Wienerschnitzel*. And from food to drink—specifically, to the haunts of Pilsner, to "certain semi-sacred houses where the ritual of beer-drinking is observed, to the shrines at which beer-fanatics meet, to 'a little old house near a Greek church' where 'the best-kept Pilsner in Vienna may be found.'"

Think of it! The best-kept Pilsner in Vienna! The very phrase amazes and enchants. It suggests the best caviare in Russia, the best oysters in Baltimore (now, by the way, a mere tradition), the worst actor on Broadway, the most virtuous angel in Heaven. Such superlatives are almost unimaginable. And yet—so rare is perfection in this weary world!—the news swiftly follows, unexpected, disconcerting, that the best Pilsner in Vienna is now far short of the ideal. For some undetermined reason—the influence of the American tourist? the decay of the Austrian national character?—the Vienna *Bierwirts* now freeze and paralyze it with too much ice, so that it chills the nerves it should caress, and fills the heart below with heaviness and repining. Avoid Vienna if you are one who understands and venerates the great Bohemian brew! And if, deluded, you find yourself there, take the first

D-Zug for Prague, that lovely city, for in it you will find the Pilsen Urquell, and in the Pilsen Urquell you will find the best Pilsner in Christendom—its color a phosphorescent, translucent, golden yellow, its foam like whipped cream, its temperature exactly and invariably right. Not even at Pilsen itself (which the Bohemians call Plzen) is the emperor of malt liquors more stupendously grateful to the palate. Write it down before you forget: the Pilsen Urquell, Prague, Bohemia, 120 miles S.S.E. of Dresden, on the river Moldau (which the natives call the Vltava). Ask for Fräulein Ottilie. Mention the name of Herr Hunecker, the American *schriftsteller*.

Of all the eminent and noble cities between the Alleghenies and the Balkans, Prague seems to be Herr Hunecker's favorite. He calls it poetic, precious, delectable, original, dramatic—a long string of adjectives, each argued for with eloquence that is unmistakably sincere. He stands fascinated before the towers and pinnacles of the Hradcany, "a miracle of tender rose and marble white with golden spots of sunshine that would have made envious Claude Monet." He pays his devotions to the Chapel of St. Wenecelas, "crammed with the bones of buried kings," or, at any rate, to the shrine of St. John Nepomucane, "composed of nearly two tons of silver." He is charmed by the beauty of the stout, black-haired, red-cheeked Bohemian girls, and hopes that enough of them will emigrate to the United States to improve the fading pulchritude of our own houris. But most of all he has praises for the Bohemian cuisine, with its incomparable apple tarts, its chicken liver in casserole, its dumplings of cream cheese and its muffins stuffed with poppy-seed jam, and for the magnificent, the overpowering, the ineffable Pilsner of Prague. This Pilsner motive runs through his book from cover to cover. In the midst of Dutch tulip-beds, Dublin cobble-stones, Madrid sunlight and Atlantic City leg-shows, one hears it insistently, deep down in

the orchestra. The cellos weave it into the polyphony, sometimes clearly, sometimes in scarcely recognizable augmentation. It is heard again in the wood-wind; the bassoons grunt it thirstily; it slides around in the violas; it rises to a stately choral in the brass. And chiefly it is in minor. Chiefly it is sounded by one who longs for the Pilsen Urquell in a far land, and among barbarous and teetotaling people, and in an atmosphere as hostile to the recreations of the palate as it is to the recreations of the intellect.

As I say, this Hunecker is a foreigner, and hence accursed. Just what strange, heathen race he belongs to I don't know: perhaps he is a Czech, a Basque, a Crim Tartar, a Walloon. The legend that he is Irish is as absurd as the political theory that he is an American. The naïf romanticism of the Celt is not in him; he leans frankly toward a more sniffish and earthly philosophy. No one has ever heard of an Irish epicure, nor of an Irish *flâneur*, nor, for that matter, of an Irish contrapuntist. The arts of the voluptuous category are unknown west of Cherbourg. But whatever the gentleman's racial origins and affiliations, he is obviously one who has made, in his day, a very valuable contribution to American letters, and, more important still, to American thought. The sheer charm of his style has won him readers in many a far-flung outpost of our morals-ridden and desolate civilization, and under cover of that charm he has diligently poisoned the American mind with heretical ideas. As yet, of course, his influence is scarcely perceptible. One might throw a thousand bricks in any American city without hitting a single man who could give an intelligible account of either Hauptmann or Cézanne, or of the reasons for holding Schumann to have been a greater composer than Mendelssohn. The boys in our colleges are still taught that Whittier was a great poet and Fenimore Cooper a great novelist. Nine-tenths of our people—perhaps ninety-nine-hundredths of our native-born—have yet to see their

first good picture, or to hear their first symphony. Our Chambersees and Richard Harding Davises are national figures; our Norrises and Dreisers are scarcely heard of. The "dean of American letters," though a competent craftsman and capable of sound work, writes from the standpoint of a somewhat jocose old woman. Of the two undoubted world figures that we have contributed to letters, one was allowed to die like a stray cat up an alley and the other was mistaken for a cheap buffoon. Criticism, as we understand it, is what a Frenchman, a German or a Russian would call donkeyism, booming emptiness, puerile pedantry. In all the arts we still cling to the ideals of the dis-senting pulpit, the public cemetery, the electric sign, the bordello parlor.

But for all that, I hang to an incorrigible optimism, and one of the chief causes of that optimism is the fact that Hunecker, after all these years, yet remains unchanged. A picturesque and rakish fellow, a believer in joy and beauty, a disdainer of petty bombast and moralizing, a sworn friend of all honest purpose and earnest striving, he has given his life to an educational work that must needs bear fruit hereafter. While the college pedagogues of the Brander Matthews type still worshipped the dead bones of Scribe and Sardou, Robertson and Bulwer-Lytton, he preached the new and revolutionary gospel of Ibsen. In the golden age of Rosa Bonheur's "The Horse Fair," he was expounding the principles of the post-impressionists. In the midst of the Sousa marches he whooped for Richard Strauss. Before the rev. professors had come to Schopenhauer, or even to Spencer, he was hauling ashore the devil-fish, Nietzsche. No stranger poisons have ever passed through the customs than those he has brought in his baggage. No man among us have ever urged more ardently, or with sounder knowledge or greater persuasiveness, that catholicity of taste which stands in direct opposition to American narrowness, ignorance and vulgarity. Himself a man of enor-

mous hospitality to new ideas, whatever their origin, he has made a long and gallant effort to ram some of that hospitality into his countrymen. Superficially, he seems to have failed. But under the surface, concealed from a first glance, he has undoubtedly left his mark. To be a civilized man in America is measurably less difficult than it used to be, say in 1890. One may at least speak of "Die Walküre" without being laughed at as a maniac, and go to see "Hedda Gabler" without being turned out of one's club, and argue that Huxley got the better of Gladstone without being challenged at the polls. I know of no man who has done more to bring about this change than James Huneker.

Two younger men who follow in his footsteps, though the one lacks his astounding range of learning and the other his abounding graces of style, are John Palmer and Ludwig Lewisohn, the one an Englishman and the other a German turned American. Palmer is the successor of George Bernard Shaw and Max Beerbohm on the London *Saturday Review*, and an excellent specimen of his writing, a one-act comedy called "Over the Hills," was printed in THE SMART SET for June. His latest offering is a thin book called "GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: HARLEQUIN or PATRIOT?" (*Century*), a sort of argument in rebuttal of all the current errors and fallacies about Shaw, *e.g.*, that he is an anarchist, that he is a great philosopher, that he is a mere clown. As Palmer shows clearly, in a book that is a model of orderly criticism, Shaw is really a profoundly serious fellow, and what is more, a profoundly conventional and moral one. He is quite as sadly obsessed by moral ideas, indeed, as the Rev. Dr. Billy Sunday, and quite as eager to rouse the rabble to a belief in their truth and importance. And his method of attack differs no more from Dr. Sunday's than the method of Col. Roosevelt differs from the method of the late P. T. Barnum. Both gentlemen woo and ravish the popular otoliths by stating the obvious in terms of the scandalous.

I know of no single doctrine of Shaw's that any reasonably intelligent man would undertake to dispute—not even the doctrine that civilization is a disease—but he always states them with such a show of impudence and heresy, with such an air of naughty babbling of secrets, that his hearers are deceived into believing that they have heard something shocking. His true philosophy was humorously revealed by his enthusiastic praise of Brioux. What Brioux believes is substantially what the average French green-grocer or wet-nurse believes—in America, what Edward Bok, Josephus Daniels or Jane Addams believes. And yet Shaw fell for this hollow rumble-bumble with sobs of joy, and hailed the fellow as one greater than Hervieu or Lavedan, nay, as one greater than Hauptmann or Andrieff. As well put the late Charles Klein above Ibsen—or Dr. Orison Swett Marden above Immanuel Kant.

The Lewisohn book is called "THE MODERN DRAMA" (*Huebsch*), and it is a painstaking and successful effort to put something approaching order into the data of dramatic criticism. He begins by pointing out a fact that is too often forgotten: that it was in France that naturalism in the drama really originated, and that two men whom we are now prone to think of as artificial and old-fashioned, to wit, Emile Augier and Alexandre Dumas *filis*, were its real fathers. Victor Hugo's "Hernani," produced back in 1830, had broken the back of classicism, but it was not until 1852 that Dumas showed the way to make the drama a genuine criticism of life. The medium of his teaching was none other than our ancient and lachrymose friend, "La Dame aux Camélias." To-day "La Dame aux Camélias" seems so mushy that even actors laugh at it, but in 1852 it was a revolutionary and even anarchistic piece of writing. Augier's "La Mariage d'Olympe" was still worse: it was the first of the so-called problem plays: it sent people away with their heads buzzing and their eyes popping. Emile Zola, to whom Mr. Lewis-

sohn gives rather too much importance, did not come until later, and his inability to master technique of the theater greatly reduced his direct influence. Besides, a far greater than he was hard upon his heels. It was not until the winter of 1878-79 that "L'Assomoir" reached the boards. A scant year later Ibsen's "A Doll's House" had its first performance in Copenhagen, and before the end of 1880 it had reached Sweden, Finland and Germany. By 1882 it had actually got into English, and on December 7, 1883, the late Helena Modjeska played it in Macaulay's Theater, Louisville, Ky.—the first performance of an Ibsen play in the tongue of Shakespeare. After this the field marshal's baton was carried by old Henrik; the French slipped backward into Sardoodledom, and it was not until 1895 or thereabout that the Ibsen influence, reaching them through Germany, rescued them from that gaudy madness.

Mr. Lewisohn's book, as I say, maps the progress of the modern drama with skill and accuracy. He has not only studied its salient plays very carefully, and their relations to one another; he has also given consideration to the ideas behind them, and to the general trend of modern thinking. The result is a volume with more information in it and more coherent criticism than ten thousand of the rhapsodic tones that give such delight to the Drama League of America and other such bands of obscurantists. The materials of the author are well marshalled, and his judgments, in the main, are shrewd and sound. He tells the truth, for example, about Brieux; he does justice to Galsworthy's "Strife," that ironic masterpiece (though afterward failing to point out the essential cheapness and absurdity of "The Fugitive"); he is full of a luminous understanding of Hauptmann, Sudermann and von Hofmannsthal; he pays a belated but well-earned tribute to Arno Holz and Johannes Schlaf; he sees clearly the noble poet beneath the mountebank's motley of Edmond Rostand; he reveals the

intrinsic weakness of the Neo-Celts. But it is rather astonishing to find so sagacious a critic succumbing to the empty pretensions of Granville Barker and overlooking entirely such men as John Masefield, Hermann Bahr and Lord Dunsany, and it is even more astonishing to find him neglecting the Russians, particularly Gogol, Gorki and Andrieff. Here, however, we must not press him too hard. Criticism is selection—and every critic may select for himself! Its faults all allowed for, "The Modern Drama" remains the most intelligent and useful volume in its field in English.

The play books of the month offer little that is worth reading. The late Victorien Sardou's "PATRIE!" competently translated by Barrett H. Clark, appears as Vol. IX of the Drama League Series of Plays (*Doubleday*). Its interest, like its materials, is chiefly archeological: one wades through such fustian, not to admire it, but to marvel at it. I can see nothing better in Anatole France's "THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE" (*Lane*), translated by Curtis Hidden Page. It is a clever imitation of an archaic farce form, but intrinsically it is leaden and unamusing. Henry Arthur Jones' "THE THEATRE OF IDEAS" (*Doran*) is even worse. The three one-act plays in the volume are entirely devoid of the ideas that the author mentions in his preface, and the long "burlesque allegory" that proceeds them is so stodgy and clumsy that I have been unable to read it at all. When Mr. Jones speaks of waiting seventeen years to get "anything approaching a suitable representation" for such an obvious piece of stage writing as "The Goal" he is simply absurd. It is almost elemental enough to be a success in vaudeville. There is nothing whatever in it to justify hailing its belated production as a triumph for sound dramatic art. Any moderately skilful dramatic hack might have written it.

The same mediocrity is visible in the three plays in the Cornish dialect that Mrs. Havelock Ellis publishes as "Love

IN DANGER" (*Houghton*); and in "ACROSS THE BORDER," by Beulah Marie Dix (*Holt*), a war melodrama; and in "SOCIETY AND BABE ROBINSON," by Ella Sterling Miguels *geb.* Clark (*Pacific Pub. Co.*), an amateurish piece of uplifting purpose; and in "SWAT THE FLY," by Eleanor Gates (*Arrow Pub. Co.*), a dramatic tract against the antivivisectionists; and in "THE FOOT OF THE ARROW," by Myrtle Glenn Roberts (*Elder*), a symbolic drama in one act. As for "WAR BRIDES," by Marion Craig Wentworth (*Century*), it is a topical shocker of the silliest sort. A young German woman, about to become a mother, receives news that her husband has been killed in the war. Rather than bear another soldier for the army (her reasons for being so sure that it will be a boy are not stated) she commits suicide. But before taking herself off, she urges the flappers of the vicinity to boycott motherhood until they are given a voice in the making and ending of war. Played by Mme. Alla Nazimova this solemn piece of piffle has enthralled the lazy slatterns who frequent vaudeville matinées, the while their bartender and car conductor husbands labor for their keep. The doctrine behind it is one that the wilder sort of tub-thumping suffragettes delight to preach, to wit, that the admission of women to political equality with men would at once put a stop to all the sorrows of the world. In this doctrine there is no truth whatever. If you want to find out how empty it is in the case of war, go ask any German woman—or any French woman.

The most interesting of the novels in the current crop, if not the most laudable as an example of beautiful letters, is "THE MAN WHO ROCKED THE EARTH," by Arthur Train and Robert Williams Wood (*Doubleday*), in its essence no more than a Jules Verne thriller, but carried through with such bounce and ingenuity that the reading of it gives a genuine pop to the eye. The combination of authors is almost ideal for that sort of foolery, for Mr. Train is a fictioneer of long experience

and much skill, and Dr. Wood is professor of experimental physics in the Johns Hopkins and a physicist of international repute. Beside, he has a pretty hand for the lighter sort of writing himself, as those who have read his nonsense book, "How to Tell the Birds from the Flowers," will certify. "The Man Who Rocked the Earth" deals with the imaginary last phase of the current war. On July 21, 1916, precisely at midnight, the astronomers of the whole world discover that their clocks are five minutes slow. An investigation soon shows the cause: the earth has shifted, ever so little but still unmistakably, upon its axis. How? Why? Out of the ether comes the answer. Somewhere—whether in the New World or the Old no one yet knows—there is a mysterious Master who has done the work, and from him, by wireless, arrives a threat that he will do more and worse unless the war is brought to an end forthwith. Moreover, he promptly makes good. That is to say, he blows a hole twenty miles wide in the Atlas Mountains and lets the Mediterranean into the Sahara Desert!

The warring nations now sit up and take notice, and the President of the United States calls a hurried conference at Washington. Another and more terrible threat comes from the potent unknown. If his command is not obeyed he will swing the earth so far that the polar ice will creep across the whole of Europe, driving out all the fighting men and burying forever the things they fight for. This time he is heeded. An armistice is declared—and presently the war ends. But not until a Harvard physicist, discovering the miracle man's location, has found him and penetrated his stupendous secret. And not until the two authors of this fair volume have delicately lifted the short hair upon the back of the reader's neck. Just what that secret is I refrain from revealing, for to reveal it would be to let the steam out of the book. But you may be sure that the learned Dr. Wood has filled the story of

it with an abounding plausibility, and that the facile Mr. Train has tricked it out with plenty of dramatic suspense. As such tales go, this is a truly excellent one. Old Jules himself was never more lavish with those precise, punditic details which lend verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. They are all here, down to laborious technical reports by German scientific commissions, with page references and footnotes.

Another quasi-scientific fable is "THE SCARLET PLAGUE," by Jack London (*Macmillan*), but here the surprises are fewer and the central idea is less interesting. This plague, it appears, is caused by a new form of micro-organism, the which turns the human being it invades a flaming scarlet and sends him to join the angels in from twenty minutes to half an hour. In six months the whole race is wiped out—all save a stray man or two here and a woman and a child or two there. These survivors, gradually collecting into small groups, revert to the forms of tribal society. Vesta Van Warden, the widow of a billionaire, is pursued and captured by her late husband's chauffeur, and the issue of their *al fresco* union is the tribe of the Chauffeurs. The members of this tribe intermarry with the Santa Rosas, the Utahs and other tribes, and so a primitive state begins to form. But we take leave of it before it has got much beyond barbarism. The teller of the tale is an ancient who is the last survivor of the original survivors. This doddering Polonius, before the plague, was a brisk young college professor. But as we see him he is a savage patriarch in a goat-skin, bolting boiled crabs on the seashore. The central idea is a favorite one with Mr. London: that the skin of civilization is very thin, that we are very little changed from the semi-apes who ranged India's prehistoric hills.

In the remaining novels, with one exception, I can discover nothing but an amiable pleasantness. The best of them is "THE IDYL OF TWIN FIRES," by Walter Prichard Eaton (*Double-*

day), the story of a young college don's adventures as a farmer and a lover. The tale is thin, but Mr. Eaton has so charming a style that he makes it very agreeable. "THE DOUBLE TRAITOR," by E. Phillips Oppenheim (*Little-Brown*), introduces the old stock company of fascinating baronesses and fiendish German spies. "ALICE AND A FAMILY," by St. John G. Ervine (*Macmillan*), is a sentimental comedy of low life in London. "THE WHITE ALLEY," by Carolyn Wells (*Lippincott*), is a detective story. "THE HAND OF PERIL," by Arthur Stringer (*Macmillan*), is another. "FIDELITY," by Susan Glasspell (*Small-Maynard*), and "MARY MORELAND," by Marie Van Vorst (*Little-Brown*), are tales of amour. Which brings us to the exception aforesaid, to wit, to "THE COMPETITIVE NEPHEW," by Montague Glass (*Doubleday*), another book of lively and excellent short stories by the father of Potash and Perlmutter.

I am a frank Glassista. One reading of such a story as "Coercing Mr. Trinkmann" or "Caveat Emptor" gives me only a sharp appetite for more of it; I read it over and over again with constantly rising delight in its amazing ingenuity, its unfailing artistry, its gargantuan mirth. A farce, true enough—but how near, always, to high comedy! How subtle the strokes of humor! How meticulously wise and shrewd the little touches! This Mr. Glass is no common rib-tickler, but a first-rate literary artist. He sees all around his characters; they are genuinely alive from the moment they open their mouths; despite the fact that they all belong to one general type, they are differentiated with the utmost skill and effectiveness. I know of no other American writer of short stories who shows a higher average of achievement. Bret Harte was dull and labored three times out of four; O. Henry two times out of three; Glass does the thing perfectly almost every time. In all his stories I remember only one positively bad one. But how many good ones—with "Object: Matrimony" to lead them all!



In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Jeanne Judson



If you are interested in advance information, not only about the mode, but about things novel, dainty and useful, to be found in New York's

best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We will be glad to tell you where any of these articles can be found, or we will purchase them for you if you desire. Simply address your inquiry to The Smart Set Shop Department, and be sure to enclose stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

CLOTH-OF-GOLD lingerie!

Silk-knit, fur-trimmed jerseys and sweater coats!

Basket-weave hats!

These are three of the many startling disclosures of the summer shops.

Cloth of gold does not sound very comfortable as a material for lingerie, but it is really silk cloth of gold and as soft and clingy as it is beautiful to look at.

The basket-weave hats are as summery as possible. They are made of ordinary fine basket willow, widely woven, and are often faced with flowered cretonne or silk, sometimes quite without trimming, or perhaps with roses woven through the crown and little ribbon streamers in true garden fashion. They cost from \$7.50 to \$10.00.

HOW STRAW TAKES SECOND PLACE

Except for Panamas, bankoks and an occasional leghorn, straw plays a very secondary part in the summer chapeaux. Even these materials are combined with cretonne, felt or pongee.

As for simple sport hats, one can buy them for any price from \$1.50 up, the lowest priced ones being fetching, untrimmed affairs of pongee and linen.

One much-favored sport hat put out by a New York wholesale house is of French fur felt. It comes in white, sand, light blue, écru, pearl and pink, and is usually without trimming except

for a band and edging of two-tone hemp braid.



Another of the smart outing hats is illustrated on this page. It is a becoming sailor shape, with leghorn brim, faced with felt and with felt crown. The leghorn is always in the natural color, but the felt may be had in all of the "sweater colorings." This hat costs \$8.50.

A long way from these smart though simple hats is one of leghorn and crêpe, a Georgette model which I saw in one of Fifth Avenue's smartest shops.

The hat is double-brimmed. The upper brim is of leghorn, star shaped, the space between the star points filled in

with crêpe. The lower brim is of pekoed crêpe. The crown also is of pleated crêpe, and it is trimmed with hand-made French roses in shades of red with deep green foliage. The price is \$20.00. This hat is illustrated on the figure on the left hand side of this page.

FOR THE SUMMER HOTEL

The gown shown in this illustration is from the same shop. It is an afternoon dress, quite elaborate enough for the dansant or even for simple evening affairs. Made of white cotton net with elbow sleeves, finished with deep cuffs of real thread lace. There is a wide collar of thread lace and a deep flounce of lace around the waist. There is a band of white ribbon above the lace at the waist and the collar is fin-



ished with a white ribbon bow. The short, full skirt has two inch-wide tucks. This frock costs only \$35.00.

Evening wraps must be a delight to the heart of a designer. Here are no fast rules of fashion set down. The only requirements are that it shall be a thing of beauty, soft and clingy and



rich in material and line. One of these coming from the same shop as the gown and hat above described is exceptionally noteworthy. It is illustrated at the top of this page.

True the price is \$125.00, but then even when one's expenditure is quite large one does not buy more than one or two evening wraps in a season. This one is of dark blue taffeta, of a cape-like design, with loose sleeves. The shoulders, back and sleeves are outlined with five rows of narrow cording. The high collar is of dark blue velvet, and it is faced with the same material. Around the bottom there is a wide band of pompadour silk flowered with deep orange shading into red, with an inch-wide edging of the blue velvet. The wrap is three-quarters length—a Drecoll model.

Another coatlike wrap that caught my attention is of sky-blue taffeta. The coat is bloused, with a long skirt, edged deeply with white fur. A collar and deep cuffs are also of white fur.

FROCKS FOR THE BEACH

Who does not envy the woman with many frocks? But even in summer, when milady's wardrobe, like nature, seems prone to prodigality, the delights of variety are often sacrificed for the

sake of having a few really good dresses. Of course it's all a matter of income.

If one but knows where to buy, it is possible to have both variety and good style in the summer wardrobe. At a model gown shop on Broadway I saw a number of frocks that amply illustrate this. One, shown in the sketch on this page, is a beach dress of sand-colored corduroy. It is made with a little sleeveless coat, fastened with two big pearl buttons at the side. The guimpe is of white muslin voile, with a high stock finished with a black ribbon band and tailored bow. There is a blue taffeta girdle for the high waist. The skirt buttons down the side with large pearl buttons. This frock costs only \$16.00.

Corduroy dresses in almost any desired shade, with pockets on both skirt and blouse, and long sleeves, may be purchased for \$12.00.

SEPARATE COLLARS AND CUFFS

Collar and cuff sets, of batiste, nainsook, or linen, embroidered or finished with borders of blue or pink, are useful to wear with suits or the simpler summer frocks. The prices are from 50 cents up.

MERMAIDS AND NEPTUNE TIGHTS

To swim or not to swim? That is the question when buying bathing costumes. Heretofore the question has been really just to be irresistible or to be unattractive? If you did not swim, you dressed yourself up like the chorus of a Broadway success, and strolled picturesquely on the beach; if you did swim, you became wet and stringy-haired and red-eyed and powderless. At last, however, a bathing suit has been brought out that will not only look attractive, but is also made to swim in, and, more wonderful still, will not offend the ultra modest.

I saw it in one of the large Fifth Avenue shops. It's all in one piece, made of knit silk wool, such as is used in the jerseys being worn this summer. The upper part, which is sleeveless,

comes down to form a short skirt. The bloomers, not much fuller than ordinary trunks, are knit right on to the waistline and come down just below the knee. They are laced at the sides and fastened with a silk cord and tassel. There is a knit belt, and belt, neck and shoulders are bound with white satin piping. The suit fastens over each shoulder with three small buttons. It may be had in any color desired for only \$10.75. This suit is shown in the picture in the center of page 454.

Of course there are the other kind of bathing costumes for the paraders, with short, full, deep-scalloped skirts like the petals of a flower, short sleeves and "military" trimming. These may be had for any price from \$3.95 up.

Bathing caps are more than usually good to look at this summer. The one



shown in the illustration on this page is the diamond cap. It is of black and white checked taffeta, tied in a flaring knot at the front, and rubber lined. The price is \$1.85. The Daisy cap is a tiny blue taffeta toque, with a wreath of double white daisies made of rubber, so that the water will never spoil their freshness. The price is \$2.95. Other caps may be bought for from 45c. to \$2.95. Separate tights of cotton, silk or wool, to be worn under the conventional suits, may be had for 95c. to \$3.95. Neptune tights, of light-weight cotton wool are \$1.00.

Then there are bathing shoes and corsets and brasieres, and — stockings. To get stockings that fit properly, look well and are still durable for bathing has always been a problem, but New York's best exclusive hosiery shop has solved it. The hose are of a silk which sea water will not rot, made in black, white and colors. They come in medium-weight silk at \$1.35 a pair and in heavy or light medium silk at \$2.50 a pair. Black silk hose with big, white polka dots costs \$5.00 a pair.

HAND-PAINTED GOWNS

But to return to the ballroom. There are those who care little for the delights of sea bathing, but the dance is always with us. It has been years since the first hand-painted gown made its appearance, but they have never ceased to be things of beauty and much to be desired, yet they have never been com-

mon, partly because really good ones are difficult to obtain, and partly because they have always been so expensive. Recently, however, a woman has been discovered in New York who is both an artist and a business woman. She uses silk chiffon for her medium and on it paints deep purple pansies or violets, white lilies-of-the-valley on black, or trailing wild roses of delicate pinkness on soft gray, and even with the full skirts which require so much more material she can sell a dress pattern hand-painted in oils for \$35.00.



USEFUL NOVELTIES FOR THE TRAVELER

For the porch or deck chair one could desire nothing more convenient than the book rest illustrated in this section. It is made of oxidized brass and is attached

to the arm of the chair at just the most convenient angle. The price is \$4.00. In the same Fifth Avenue shop with this I saw innumerable little conveniences for the traveler. Each one is enclosed in a small box, with a clever verse printed on the top, so that they make very appropriate gifts to vacation-going friends. One box contains a hat cleaner, another six paper drinking cups, another a box of assorted corks; there is a box containing baggage tags, another with paper towels, another with face powder papers and one with soap papers, and most convenient of all, perhaps, there is a box of tiny black "pills" which become a very serviceable fluid for your fountain pen or ink well when

(Continued on second page following)



The Price of Progress

THE Panama Canal stands as one of the most marvelous achievements of the age. Into its construction went not only the highest engineering skill, but the best business brains of the nation, backed by hundreds of millions of dollars.

Suppose conditions not to be foreseen made it necessary to replace the present canal with a new and larger waterway of the sea-level type, to be built in the next ten years.

Also suppose that this new canal would be the means of a great saving in time and money to the canal-using public, because of the rapid progress in canal engineering.

This sounds improbable; yet it illustrates exactly what has happened in the development of the telephone, and what certainly will happen again.

Increasing demands upon the

telephone system, calling for more extended and better service, forced removal of every part of the plant not equal to these demands. Switchboards, cables, wires and the telephone instrument itself were changed time and again, as fast as the advancing art of the telephone could improve them.

It was practical to do all this because it greatly increased the capacity of the plant, reduced service rates and added subscribers by the hundred thousand.

In ten years, the telephone plant of the Bell System has been rebuilt and renewed, piece by piece, at an expense exceeding the cost of the Canal.

Thus the Bell System is kept at the highest point of efficiency, always apace with the telephone requirements of the public. And the usefulness of the telephone has been extended to all the people.



AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

One Policy

One System

Universal Service

In answering advertisements, please mention THE SMART SET

dissolved in water. All of these travelers' novelties cost 25c. each.

FUR TRIMMED JERSEYS

The rather mannish and altogether ugly sweater affected by the athletic girl of some years past has developed this season into the silk knit jersey which is just suggestive enough of men's wear to give it dash and is altogether beautiful. They are every color of the rainbow, made with pockets, of course, and with loose knit belts finished with tassels. Some of them are trimmed with the fur which seems determined to stay in vogue all summer. Those of artificial silk come as low as \$8.50. Besides the plain colors there are daring blue and yellow stripes, black and white combinations, or even red and yellow. Some of the pure silk ones cost as high as \$50.

No one would think of anything but silk stockings for ordinary wear today, and silk lingerie is almost as common. Why not, when one can buy a glove silk vest with tailor or crochet finish, for only \$1.25, or an embroidered one for \$1.95? In combinations, sheer batiste or nainsook is also much used because it is quite as dainty and costs even less. A batiste combination trimmed with Valenciennes and Cluny ribbon casing costs \$2.95; the same design in crêpe de chine is \$4.95. Another of batiste with Valenciennes lace inset, with hemstitching is only \$1.95; in crêpe de chine it costs \$3.95. In the same shop with these is a *robe de nuit* called "Vanite," made of sheerest batiste with exquisite Valenciennes lace and a tucked girdle of batiste and ribbon, which sells for only \$2.95.

HOMES FOR THE BIRDS (?)

Have you bought one of those cunning Japanese bird cages? The fact that you do not possess a bird need not trouble you at all. Only a few of the people who buy Japanese bird cages do own birds. The



cages are quite sufficient; made of wicker in natural color or stained, and decorated with artificial flowers, they make attractive decorations for garden, porch or breakfast room. Of course if you want to make them very realistic you can buy a little artificial bird to go inside. His gay plumage will flash as brightly between the bars of the cage as would a real bird's, and he will require no attention at all. These cages cost \$2.50, \$5.00 and \$8.00. The \$8.00 cage is large enough for a real live bird; the other sizes are for ornament only.

A much more elaborate Chinese cage is of red teak wood, built like a little two-story house, with ivory and metal trimmings. The floor is removable so that the cage can be easily cleaned and the food cups are of Chinese porcelain. The price of this cage is \$30.00.

In the same Fifth Avenue shop where these cages are shown, one can buy bird baths for the garden or lawn, made of stone ware. They are twelve inches across and cost \$4.00; with a pedestal the price is \$9.00.

Talking of birds makes one think of the clever cockatoo summer smoking stands. They are tall, red-enameled bird perches. On either end of the perch is an ash tray and a match box and balanced jauntily in the middle is a gay, green cockatoo. These-smoker's stands cost \$5.00.

RUSKIN POTTERY

Lovers of oldtime lustre wear will be enchanted with the Ruskin pottery being shown by a Forty-second Street shop. It is made in England and possesses a soft, glowing finish much like lustre wear, and comes usually in golden yellow tints. The shapes are pleasing and artistic and the price—well, only \$12.00 for a beautiful rose jar.

No matter where you live you can always avail yourself of the best that the New York shops have to offer, through the Shopping Service which THE SMART SET has established. Or if you live in the city you can save time by making use of this department which is designed for the convenience of all of our readers. We will purchase anything for sale in New York City upon receipt of its retail price, or if the cost is unknown to you, we will price the same and hold it for you until the requisite amount is received. Every article described in this department is guaranteed to be as represented. This service is at your disposal free of charge.